

Penguin

The Mahabharata

Volume 2

(Sections 16 to 32)

Translated By

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PENGUIN BOOKS

Contents

About the Translator

Bibek Debroy is an economist and is Research Professor (Centre of Policy Research) and Contributing Editor (Indian Express group). He has worked in universities, research institutes, industry and for the government. He has published books, papers and popular articles in economics. But he has also published in Indology and translated (into English) the Vedas, the Puranas, the Upanishads and the Gita (Penguin India, 2005). His book *Sarama and her Children: The Dog in Indian Myth* (Penguin India, 2008) splices his interest in Hinduism with his love for dogs. He is currently translating the remaining volumes of the unabridged Mahabharata.

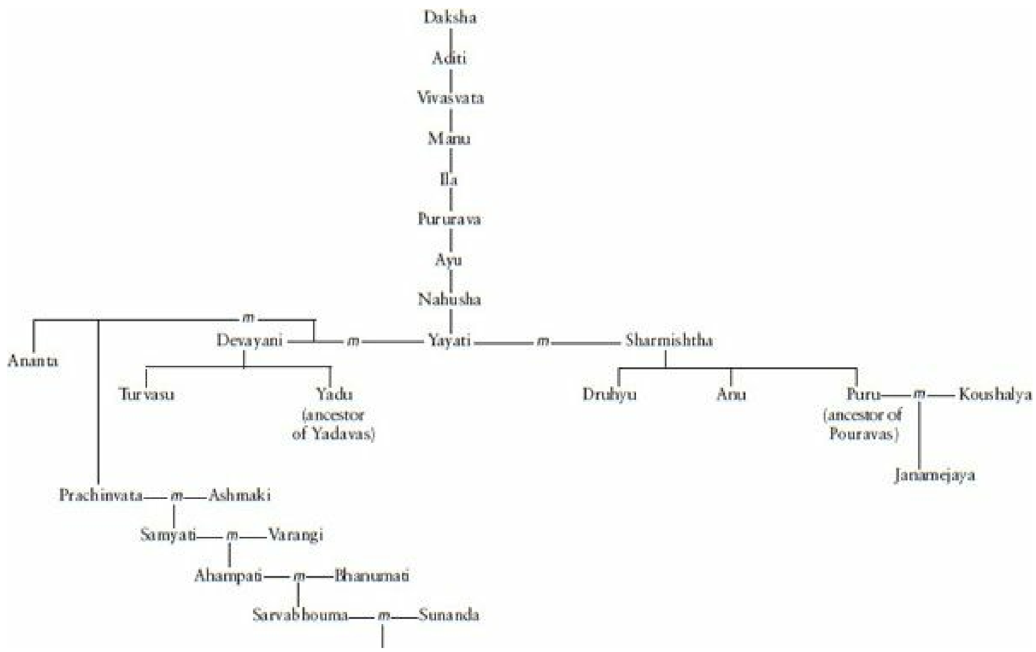
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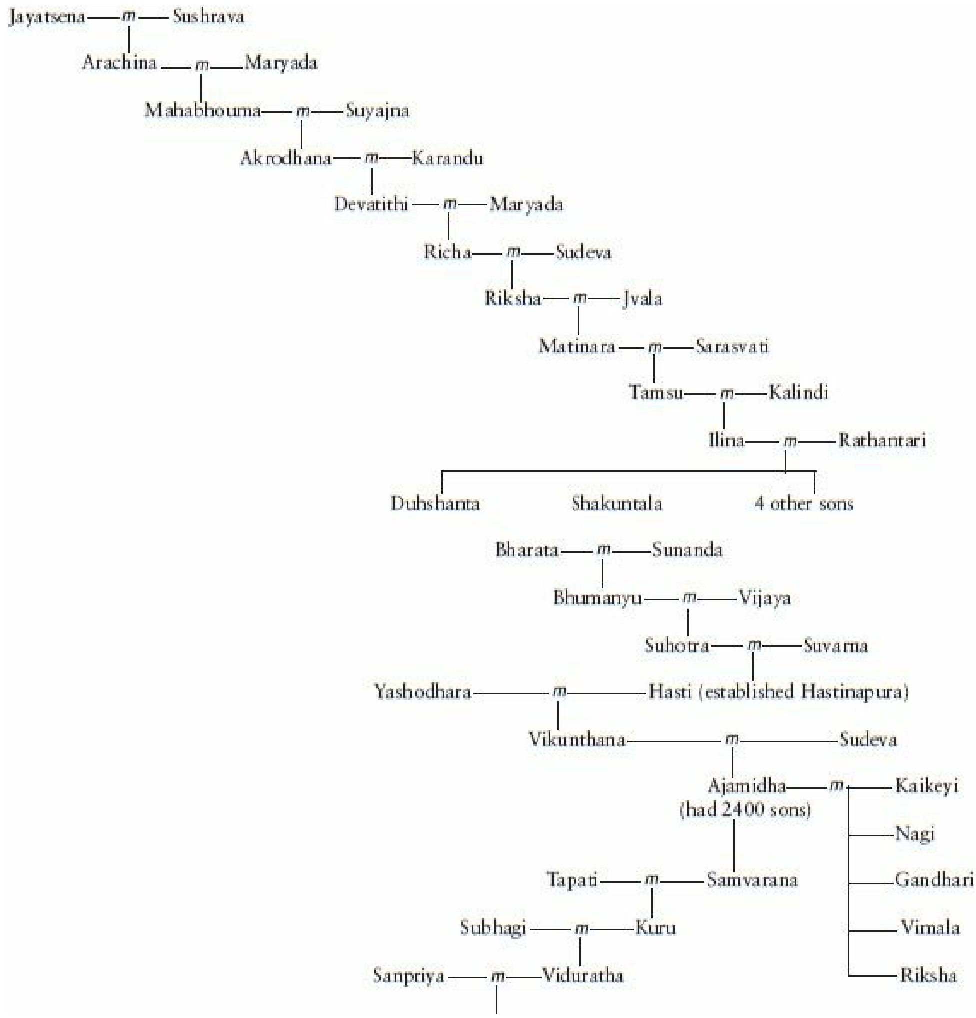
Ardha bhāryā manuṣyasya bhāryā śreṣṭhatamaḥ sakhā
Bhāryā mulam trivargasya bhāryā mitram mariṣyataḥ

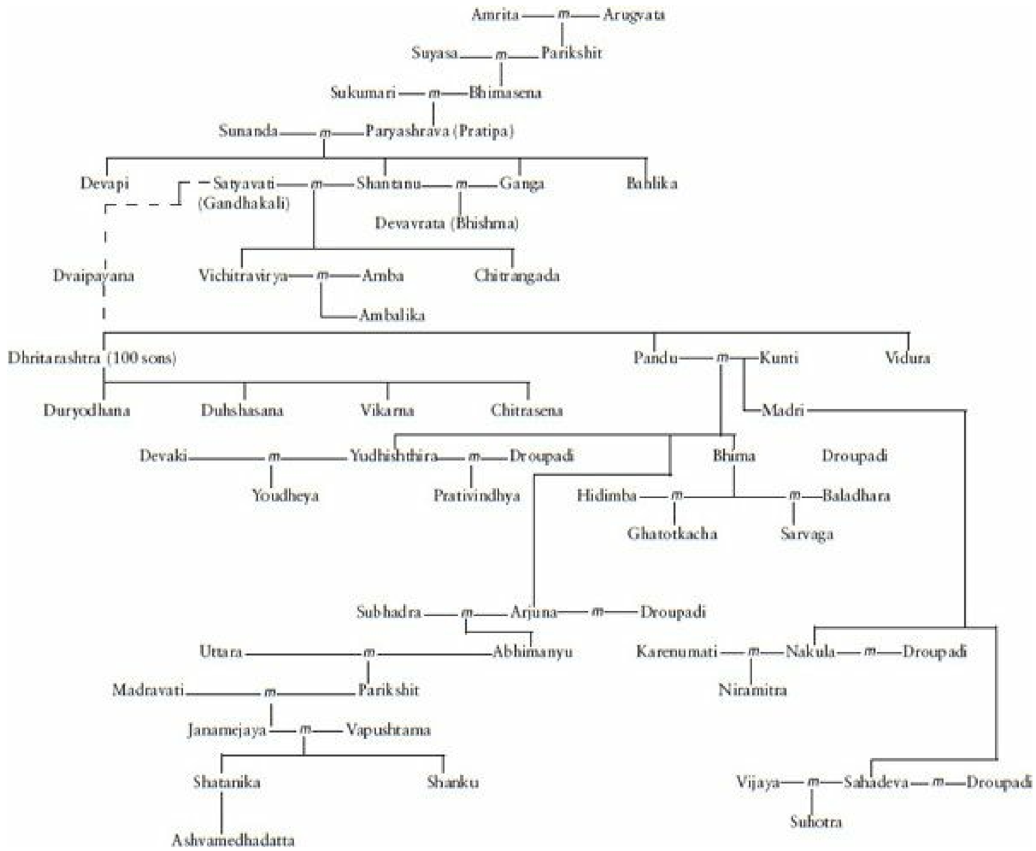
Mahabharata (1/68/40)

Family Tree

Bharata/Puru Lineage

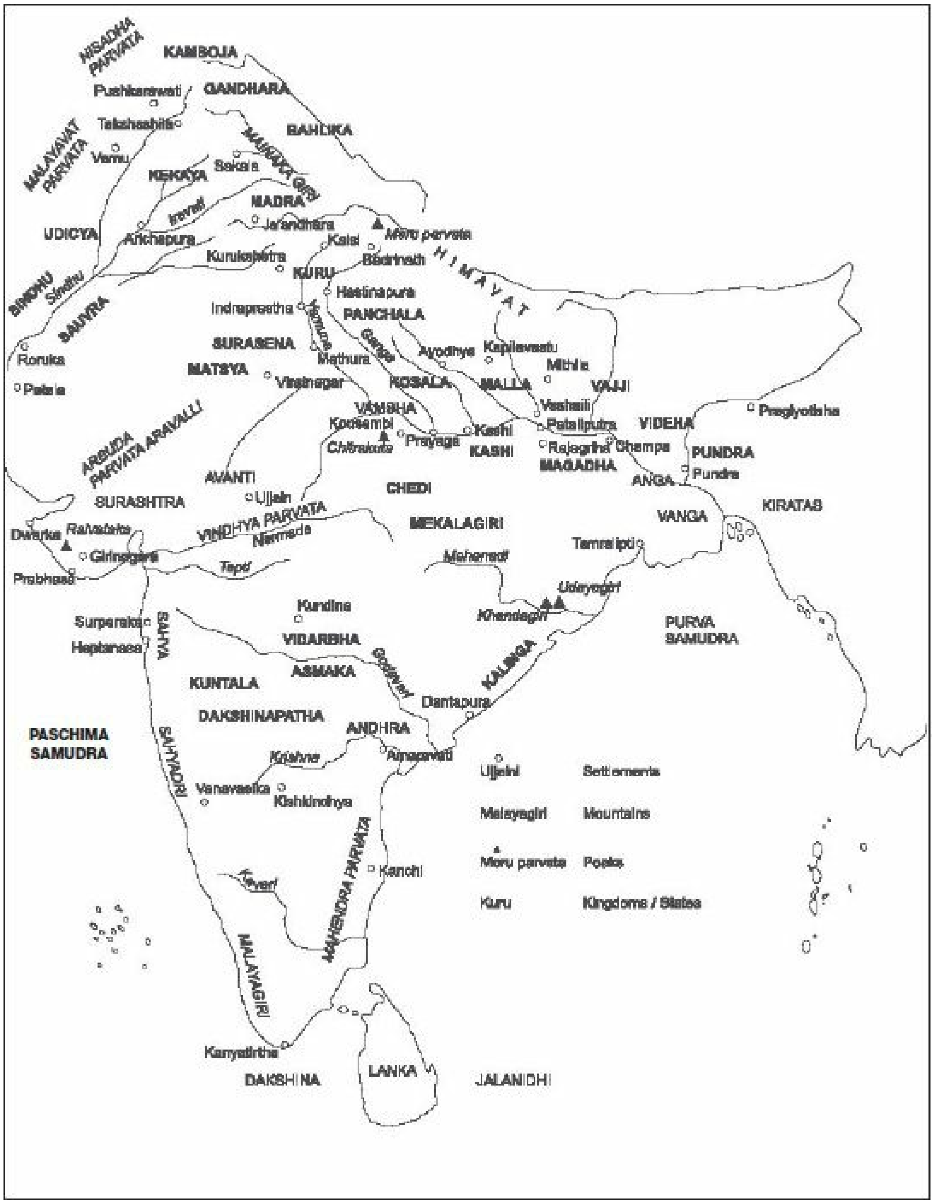



Jayatsena — m — Sushrava
Arachina — m — Maryada
Mahabhouma — m — Suyajna
Akrodhana — m — Karandu
Devatithi — m — Maryada
Richa — m — Sudeva
Riksha — m — Jvala
Matinara — m — Sarasvati
Tamsu — m — Kalindi
Ilina — m — Rathantari
Duhshanta
Shakuntala
4 other sons
Bharata — m — Sunanda
Bhumanyu — m — Vijaya
Suhotra — m — Suvarna
Yashodhara — m — Hasti (established Hastinapura)
Vikunthana — m — Sudeva
Ajamidha (had 2400 sons) — m
Kaikeyi
Nagi
Gandhari
Vimala
Riksha
Tapati — m — Samvarana
Subhagi — m — Kuru
Sanpriya — m — Viduratha


Amrita — m — Arugvata
Suyasa — m — Parikshit
Sukumari — m — Bhimasena
Sunanda — m — Paryashrava (Pratipa)
Devapi
Satyavati (Gandhakali) — m — Shantanu — m — Ganga
Bahlika
Devavrata (Bhishma)
Dvaipayana
Vichitravirya — m — Amba
Chitrangada
Ambalika
Dhritarashtra (100 sons)
Pandu — m — Kunti
Vidura
Duryodhana
Duhshasana
Vikarna
Chitrasena
Madri
Devaki — m — Yudhishthira — m — Droupadi
Bhima
Droupadi
Youdheya
Prativindhya
Hidimba — m
m — Baladhara
Ghatotkacha
Sarvaga
Subhadra — m — Arjuna — m — Droupadi
Uttara — m — Abhimanyu
Karenumati — m — Nakula — m — Droupadi
Madravati — m — Parikshit
Niramitra
Janamejaya — m — Vapushtama
Shatanika
Shanku
Vijaya — m — Sahadeva — m — Droupadi
Suhotra
Ashvamedhadatta

Map of Bharatavarsha

BHARATAVARSHA (SIXTH CENTURY BCE)



Introduction

The Hindu tradition has an amazingly large corpus of religious texts, spanning Vedas, Vedanta (*brahmanas*,[1] *aranyakas*,[2] Upanishads,), Vedangas,[3] *smritis*, Puranas, dharmashastras and *itihasa*. For most of these texts, especially if one excludes classical Sanskrit literature, we don't quite know when they were composed and by whom, not that one is looking for single authors. Some of the minor Puranas (Upa Purana) are of later vintage. For instance, the Bhavishya Purana (which is often listed as a major Purana or Maha Purana) mentions Queen Victoria.

In the listing of the corpus above figures itihasa, translated into English as history. History doesn't entirely capture the nuance of itihasa, which is better translated as 'this is indeed what happened'. Itihasa isn't myth or fiction. It is a chronicle of what happened; it is fact. Or so runs the belief. And itihasa consists of India's two major epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The former is believed to have been composed as poetry and the latter as prose. This isn't quite correct. The Ramayana has segments in prose and the Mahabharata has segments in poetry. Itihasa doesn't quite belong to the category of religious texts in a way that the Vedas and Vedanta are religious. However, the dividing line between what is religious and what is not is fuzzy. After all, itihasa is also about attaining the objectives of *dharma*,[4] *artha*,[5] *kama*[6] and *moksha*[7] and the Mahabharata includes Hinduism's most important spiritual text—the Bhagavad Gita.

The epics are not part of the *shruti* tradition. That tradition is like revelation, without any composer. The epics are part of the *smriti* tradition. At the time they were composed, there was no question of texts being written down. They were recited, heard, memorized and passed down through the generations. But the smriti tradition had composers. The Ramayana was composed by Valmiki, regarded as the first poet or *kavi*. The word kavi has a secondary meaning as poet or rhymer. The primary meaning of kavi is someone who is wise. And in that sense, the composer of the Mahabharata was no less wise. This was Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva. He was so named because he classified (*vyasa*) the Vedas. Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva isn't a proper name. It is a title. Once in a while, in accordance with the needs of the era, the Vedas need to be classified. Each such person obtains the title and there have been twenty-eight Vyasadevas so far.

At one level, the question about who composed the Mahabharata is pointless. According to popular belief and according to what the Mahabharata itself states, it was composed by Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa (Vyasadeva). But the text was not composed and cast in stone at a single point in time. Multiple authors kept adding layers and embellishing it. Sections just kept getting added and it is no one's suggestion that Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa composed the text of the Mahabharata as it stands

today.

Consequently, the Mahabharata is far more unstructured than the Ramayana. The major sections of the Ramayana are known as *kanda*s and one meaning of the word kanda is the stem or trunk of a tree, suggesting solidity. The major sections of the Mahabharata are known as *parva*s and while one meaning of the word parva is limb or member or joint, in its nuance there is greater fluidity in the word parva than in kanda.

The Vyasadeva we are concerned with had a proper name of Krishna Dvaipayana. He was born on an island (*dvipa*). That explains the Dvaipayana part of the name. He was dark. That explains the Krishna part of the name. (It wasn't only the incarnation of Vishnu who had the name of Krishna.) Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa was also related to the protagonists of the Mahabharata story. To go back to the origins, the Ramayana is about the solar dynasty, while the Mahabharata is about the lunar dynasty. As is to be expected, the lunar dynasty begins with Soma (the moon) and goes down through Pururava (who married the famous apsara Urvashi), Nahusha and Yayati. Yayati became old, but wasn't ready to give up the pleasures of life. He asked his sons to temporarily loan him their youth. All but one refused. The ones who refused were cursed that they would never be kings, and this includes the Yadavas (descended from Yadu). The one who agreed was Puru and the lunar dynasty continued through him. Puru's son Duhshanta was made famous by Kalidasa in the Duhshanta–Shakuntala story and their son was Bharata, contributing to the name of Bharatavarsha. Bharata's grandson was Kuru. We often tend to think of the Kouravas as the evil protagonists in the Mahabharata story and the Pandavas as the good protagonists. Since Kuru was a common ancestor, the appellation Kourava applies equally to Yudhishthira and his brothers and Duryodhana and his brothers. Kuru's grandson was Shantanu. Through Satyavati, Shantanu fathered Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. However, the sage Parashara had already fathered Krishna Dvaipayana through Satyavati. And Shantanu had already fathered Bhishma through Ganga. Dhritarasthra and Pandu were fathered on Vichitravirya's wives by Krishna Dvaipayana.

The story of the epic is also about these antecedents and consequents. The core Mahabharata story is known to every Indian and is normally understood as a dispute between the Kouravas (descended from Dhritarashtra) and the Pandavas (descended from Pandu). However, this is a distilled version, which really begins with Shantanu. The non-distilled version takes us to the roots of the genealogical tree and at several points along this tree we confront a problem with impotence/sterility/death, resulting in offspring through a surrogate father. Such sons were accepted in that day and age. Nor was this a lunar dynasty problem alone. In the Ramayana, Dasharatha of the solar dynasty also had an infertility problem, corrected through a sacrifice. To return to the genealogical tree, the Pandavas won the Kurukshetra war. However, their five sons through Droupadi were killed. So was Bhima's son Ghatotkacha, fathered on Hidimba.

As was Arjuna's son Abhimanyu, fathered on Subhadra. Abhimanyu's son Parikshit inherited the throne in Hastinapura, but was killed by a serpent. Parikshit's son was Janamejaya.

Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa's powers of composition were remarkable. Having classified the Vedas, he composed the Mahabharata in 100,000 shlokas or couplets. Today's Mahabharata text doesn't have that many shlokas, even if the Hari Vamsha (regarded as the epilogue to the Mahabharata) is included. One reaches around 90,000 shlokas. That too, is a gigantic number. (The Mahabharata is almost four times the size of the Ramayana and is longer than any other epic anywhere in the world.) For a count of 90,000 Sanskrit shlokas, we are talking about something in the neighbourhood of two million words. The text of the Mahabharata tells us that Krishna Dvaipayana finished this composition in three years. This doesn't necessarily mean that he composed 90,000 shlokas. The text also tells us that there are three versions to the Mahabharata. The original version was called Jaya and had 8,800 shlokas. This was expanded to 24,000 shlokas and called Bharata. Finally, it was expanded to 90,000 (or 100,000) shlokas and called Mahabharata.

Krishna Dvaipayana didn't rest even after that. He composed the eighteen Maha Puranas, adding another 400,000 shlokas. Having composed the Mahabharata, he taught it to his disciple Vaishampayana. When Parikshit was killed by a serpent, Janamejaya organized a snake-sacrifice to destroy the serpents. With all the sages assembled there, Vaishampayana turned up and the assembled sages wanted to know the story of the Mahabharata, as composed by Krishna Dvaipayana. Janamejaya also wanted to know why Parikshit had been killed by the serpent. That's the background against which the epic is recited. However, there is another round of recounting too. Much later, the sages assembled for a sacrifice in Naimisharanya and asked Lomaharshana (alternatively, Romaharshana) to recite what he had heard at Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice. Lomaharshana was a *suta*, the sutas being charioteers and bards or raconteurs. As the son of a suta, Lomaharshana is also referred to as Souti. But Souti or Lomaharshana aren't quite his proper names. His proper name is Ugrashrava. Souti refers to his birth. He owes the name Lomaharshana to the fact that the body-hair (*loma* or *roma*) stood up (*harshana*) on hearing his tales. Within the text therefore, two people are telling the tale. Sometimes it is Vaishampayana and sometimes it is Lomaharshana. Incidentally, the stories of the Puranas are recounted by Lomaharshana, without Vaishampayana intruding. Having composed the Puranas, Krishna Dvaipayana taught them to his disciple Lomaharshana. For what it is worth, there are scholars who have used statistical tests to try and identify the multiple authors of the Mahabharata.

As we are certain there were multiple authors rather than a single one, the question of when the Mahabharata was composed is somewhat pointless. It wasn't composed on a single date. It was composed over a span of more than 1000 years, perhaps between

800 BCE and 400 ACE. It is impossible to be more accurate than that. There is a difference between dating the composition and dating the incidents, such as the date of the Kurukshetra war. Dating the incidents is both subjective and controversial and irrelevant for the purposes of this translation. A timeline of 1000 years isn't short. But even then, the size of the corpus is nothing short of amazing.

Familiarity with Sanskrit is dying out. The first decades of the twenty-first century are quite unlike the first decades of the twentieth. Lamentation over what is inevitable serves no purpose. English is increasingly becoming the global language, courtesy colonies (North America, South Asia, East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Africa) rather than the former colonizer. If familiarity with the corpus is not to die out, it needs to be accessible in English.

There are many different versions or recensions of the Mahabharata. However, between 1919 and 1966, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) in Pune produced what has come to be known as the critical edition. This is an authenticated text produced by a board of scholars and seeks to eliminate later interpolations, unifying the text across the various regional versions. This is the text followed in this translation. One should also mention that the critical edition's text is not invariably smooth. Sometimes, the transition from one shloka to another is abrupt, because the intervening shloka has been weeded out. With the intervening shloka included, a non-critical version of the text sometimes makes better sense. On a few occasions, I have had the temerity to point this out in the notes which I have included in my translation.

It took a long time for this critical edition to be put together. The exercise began in 1919. Without the Hari Vamsha, the complete critical edition became available in 1966. And with the Hari Vamsha, the complete critical edition became available in 1970. Before this, there were regional variations in the text and the main versions were available from Bengal, Bombay and the south. However, now, one should stick to the critical edition, though there are occasional instances where there are reasons for dissatisfaction with what the scholars of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute have accomplished. But in all fairness, there are two published versions of the critical edition. The first one has the bare bones of the critical edition's text. The second has all the regional versions collated, with copious notes. The former is for the ordinary reader, assuming he/she knows Sanskrit. And the latter is for the scholar. Consequently, some popular beliefs no longer find a place in the critical edition's text. For example, it is believed that Vedavyasa dictated the text to Ganesha, who wrote it down. But Ganesha had a condition before accepting. Vedavyasa would have to dictate continuously, without stopping. Vedavyasa threw in a counter-condition. Ganesha would have to

understand each couplet before he wrote it down. To flummox Ganesha and give himself time to think, Vedavyasa threw in some cryptic verses. This attractive anecdote has been excised from the critical edition's text. Barring material that is completely religious (specific hymns or the Bhagavad Gita), the Sanskrit text is reasonably easy to understand. Oddly, I have had the most difficulty with things that Vidura has sometimes said. Arya has today come to connote ethnicity. Originally, it meant language. That is, those who spoke Sanskrit were Aryas. Those who did not speak Sanskrit were mlecchas. Vidura is supposed to have been skilled in the mlechha language. Is that the reason why some of Vidura's statements seem obscure? In similar vein, in popular renderings, when Droupadi is being disrobed, she prays to Krishna. Krishna provides the never-ending stream of garments that stump Duhshasana. The critical edition has excised the prayer to Krishna. The never-ending stream of garments is given as an extraordinary event. However, there is no intervention from Krishna.

How is the Mahabharata classified? The core component is the couplet or shloka. Several such shlokas form a chapter or *adhyaya*. Several adhyayas form a parva. Most people probably think that the Mahabharata has eighteen parvas. This is true, but there is another 100-parva classification that is indicated in the text itself. That is, the adhyayas can be classified either according to eighteen parvas or according to 100 parvas. The table (given on pp. xxiii–xxvi), based on the critical edition, should make this clear. As the table shows, the present critical edition only has ninety-eight parvas of the 100-parva classification, though the 100 parvas are named in the text.

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(1) Adi	1) Anukramanika[8]	1	210
	2) Parvasamgraha	1	243
	3) Poushya	1	195
	4) Pouloma	9	153
	5) Astika	41	1025
	6) Adi-vamshavatarana	5	257
	7) Sambhava	65	2394
	8) Jatugriha-daha	15	373
	9) Hidimba-vadha	6	169
	10) Baka-vadha	8	206
	11) Chaitraratha	21	557
	12) Droupadi-svayamvara	12	263
	13) Vaivahika	6	155
	14) Viduragamana	7	174

[8] Anukramanika is sometimes called Anukramani.

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
	15) Rajya-labha	1	50
	16) Arjuna-vanavasa	11	298
	17) Subhadra-harana	2	57
	18) Harana harika	1	82
	19) Khandava-daha	12	344
		Total = 225	Total = 7205
(2) Sabha	20) Sabha	11	429
	21) Mantra	6	222
	22) Jarasandha-vadha	5	195
	23) Digvijaya	7	188
	24) Rajasuya	3	97
	25) Arghabhiharana	4	99
	26) Shishupala-vadha	6	191
	27) Dyuta	23	734
	28) Anudyuta	7	232
		Total = 72	Total = 2387
(3) Aranyaka	29) Aranyaka	11	327
	30) Kirmira-vadha	1	75
	31) Kairata	30	1158
	32) Indralokabhigamana	37	1157
	33) Tirtha-yatra	74	2422
	34) Jatasura-vadha	1	61
	35) Yaksha-yuddha	18	710
	36) Ajagara	6	201
	37) Markandeya-samasya	43	1656
	38) Droupadi-Satyabhama-sambada	3	88
	39) Ghosha-yatra	19	519
	40) Mriga-svapna-bhaya	1	16
	41) Vrihi-drounika	3	117
	42) Droupadi-harana	36	1247
	43) Kundala-harana	11	294
	44) Araneya	5	191
		Total = 299	Total = 10239
(4) Virata	45) Vairata	12	271
	46) Kichaka-vadha	11	353
	47) Go-grahana	39	933
	48) Vaivahika	5	179
		Total = 67	Total = 1736

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(5) Udyoga	49) Udyoga	21	575
	50) Sanjaya-yana	11	274
	51) Prajagara	9	541
	52) Sanatsujata	4	121
	53) Yana-sandhi	24	709
	54) Bhagavad-dhyana	65	2053
	55) Karnopani-vadha	14	351
	56) Abhiniryana	4	169
	57) Bhishmabhishechana	4	122
	58) Uluka-yana	4	100
	59) Rathatiratha-sankhyana	9	231
	60) Ambopakhyana	28	755
		Total = 197	Total = 6001
(6) Bhishma	61) Jambukhanda-vinirmana	11	377
	62) Bhumi	2	87
	63) Bhagavad-gita	27	974
	64) Bhishma-vadha	77	3943
		Total = 117	Total = 5381
(7) Drona	65) Dronabhisheka	15	634
	66) Samshaptaka-vadha	16	717
	67) Abhimanyu-vadha	20	640
	68) Pratijna	9	365
	69) Jayadratha-vadha	61	2834
	70) Ghatotkacha-vadha	33	1645
	71) Drona-vadha	11	692
	72) Narayanastra-moksha	8	542
		Total = 173	Total = 8069
(8) Karna	73) Karna-vadha	69	3870
(9) Shalya	74) Shalya-vadha	16	1074
	75) Hrada-pravesha	12	664
	76) Tirtha-yatra	25	1258
	77) Gada-yuddha	11	545
		Total = 64	Total = 3541
(10) Souptika	78) Souptika	9	514
	79) Aishika	9	257
		Total = 18	Total = 771

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(11) Stri	80) Vishoka	8	177
	81) Stri	17	468
	82) Shraddha	1	44
	83) Jala-pradanika	1	24
		Total = 27	Total = 713
(12) Shanti	84) Raja-dharma	128	4511
	85) Apad-dharma	39	1560
	86) Moksha-dharma	186	6935
		Total = 353	Total = 13006
(13) Anushasana	87) Dana-dharma	152	6409
	88) Bhishma-svargarohana	2	84
		Total = 154	Total = 6493
(14) Ashva-medhika	89) Ashvamedha	96	2741
(15) Ashra-mavasika	90) Ashrama-vasa	35	736
	91) Putra-darshana	9	234
	92) Naradagamana	3	91
		Total = 47	Total = 1061
(16) Mousala	93) Mousala	9	273
(17) Mahapra-sthanika	94) Mahaprasthanika	3	106
(18) Svargarohana	95) Svargarohana	5	194
Hari Vamsha	96) Hari-vamsha	45	2442
	97) Vishnu	68	3426
	98) Bhavishya	5	205
		Total = 118	Total = 6073
Grand total = 19	Grand total = 98 (95 + 3)	Grand total = 2113 (1995 + 118)	Grand total = 79,860 (73787 + 6073)

Thus, interpreted in terms of BORI's critical edition, the Mahabharata no longer possesses the 100,000 shlokas it is supposed to have. The figure is a little short of 75,000 (73,787 to be precise). Should the Hari Vamsha be included in a translation of the Mahabharata? It doesn't quite belong. Yet, it is described as a *khila* or supplement to the Mahabharata and BORI includes it as part of the critical edition, though in a separate volume. Hence, I have included the Hari Vamsha in this translation as well. With the Hari Vamsha, the number of shlokas increases to a shade less than 80,000 (79,860 to be precise). However, in some of the regional versions the text of the Mahabharata proper is closer to 85,000 shlokas and with the Hari Vamsha included, one approaches 95,000, though one doesn't quite touch 100,000.

Why should there be another translation of the Mahabharata? Surely, it must have been translated innumerable times. Contrary to popular impression, unabridged translations of the Mahabharata in English are extremely rare. One should not confuse abridged translations with unabridged versions. There are only five unabridged translations—by Kisori Mohan Ganguly (1883–96), by Manmatha Nath Dutt (1895–1905), by the University of Chicago and J.A.B. van Buitenen (1973 onwards), by P. Lal and Writers Workshop (2005 onwards) and the Clay Sanskrit Library edition (2005 onwards). Of these, P. Lal is more a poetic trans-creation than a translation. The Clay

Sanskrit Library edition is not based on the critical edition, deliberately so. In the days of Ganguly and Dutt, the critical edition didn't exist. The language in these two versions is now archaic and there are some shlokas that these two translators decided not to include, believing them to be untranslatable in that day and age. Almost three decades later, the Chicago version is still not complete, and the Clay edition, not being translated in sequence, is still in progress. However, the primary reason for venturing into yet another translation is not just the vacuum that exists, but also reason for dissatisfaction with other attempts. Stated more explicitly, this translation, I believe, is better and more authentic—but I leave it to the reader to be the final judge. (While translating 80,000 shlokas is a hazardous venture, since Ganguly, Dutt and Lal are Bengalis, surely a fourth Bengali must also be preeminently qualified to embark on this venture!)

A few comments on the translation are now in order. First, there is the vexed question of diacritical marks—should they be used or not? Diacritical marks make the translation and pronunciation more accurate, but often put readers off. Sacrificing academic purity, there is thus a conscious decision to avoid diacritical marks. Second, since diacritical marks are not being used, Sanskrit words and proper names are written in what seems to be phonetically natural and the closest—such as, Droupadi rather than Draupadi. There are rare instances where avoidance of diacritical marks can cause minor confusion, for example, between Krishna (Krishnaa) as in Droupadi[9] and Krishna as in Vaasudeva. However, such instances are extremely rare and the context should make these differences, which are mostly of the gender kind, clear. Third, there are some words that simply cannot be translated. One such word is dharma. More accurately, such words are translated the first time they occur. But on subsequent occasions, they are romanized in the text. Fourth, the translation sticks to the Sanskrit text as closely as possible. If the text uses the word Kounteya, this translation will leave it as Kounteya or Kunti's son and not attempt to replace it with Arjuna. Instead, there will be a note explaining that in that specific context Kounteya refers to Arjuna or, somewhat more rarely, Yudhishthira or Bhima. This is also the case in the structure of the English sentences. To cite an instance, if a metaphor occurs towards the beginning of the Sanskrit shloka, the English sentence attempts to retain it at the beginning too. Had this not been done, the English might have read smoother. But to the extent there is a trade-off, one has stuck to what is most accurate, rather than attempting to make the English smooth and less stilted.

As the table shows, the parvas (in the eighteen-parva classification) vary widely in length. The gigantic Aranyaka or Shanti Parva can be contrasted with the slim Mousala Parva. Breaking up the translation into separate volumes based on this eighteen-parva classification therefore doesn't work. The volumes will not be remotely similar in size. Most translators seem to keep a target of ten to twelve volumes when translating all the

parvas. Assuming ten volumes, 10 per cent means roughly 200 chapters and 7000 shlokas. This works rather well for Adi Parva, but collapses thereafter. Most translators therefore have Adi Parva as the first volume and then handle the heterogeneity across the eighteen parvas in subsequent volumes. This translation approaches the break-up of volumes somewhat differently, in the sense that roughly 10 per cent of the text is covered in each volume. The complete text, as explained earlier, is roughly 200 chapters and 7,000 shlokas per volume. For example, then, this first volume has been cut off at 199 chapters and a little less than 6,500 shlokas. It includes 90 per cent of Adi Parva, but not all of it and covers the first fifteen parvas of the 100-(or 98-) parva classification.

The Mahabharata is one of the greatest stories ever told. It has plots and subplots and meanderings and digressions. It is much more than the core story of a war between the Kouravas and the Pandavas, which everyone is familiar with, the culmination of which was the battle in Kurukshetra. In the Adi Parva, there is a lot more which happens before the Kouravas and the Pandavas actually arrive on the scene. In the 100-parva classification, the Kouravas and the Pandavas don't arrive on the scene until Section 6.

From the Vedas and Vedanta literature, we know that Janamejaya and Parikshit were historical persons. From Patanjali's grammar and other contemporary texts, we know that the Mahabharata text existed by around 400 BCE. This need not of course be the final text of Mahabharata, but could have been the original text of Jaya. The Hindu eras or *yugas* are four in number—Satya (or Krita) Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. This cycle then repeats itself, with another Satya Yuga following Kali Yuga. The events of the Ramayana occurred in Treta Yuga. The events of the Mahabharata occurred in Dvapara Yuga. This is in line with Rama being Vishnu's seventh incarnation and Krishna being the eighth. (The ninth is Buddha and the tenth is Kalki.) We are now in Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga didn't begin with the Kurukshetra war. It began with Krishna's death, an event that occurred thirty-six years after the Kurukshetra war. Astronomical data do exist in the epic. These can be used to date the Kurukshetra war, or the advent of Kali Yuga. However, if the text was composed at different points in time, with additions and interpolations, internal consistency in astronomical data is unlikely. In popular belief, following two alternative astronomers, the Kurukshetra war has been dated to 3102 BCE (following Aryabhatta) and 2449 BCE (following Varahamihira). This doesn't mesh with the timelines of Indian history. Mahapadma Nanda ascended the throne in 382 BCE, a historical fact on which there is no dispute. The Puranas have genealogical lists. Some of these state that 1050 years elapsed between Parikshit's birth and Mahapadma Nanda's ascension. Others state that 1015 years elapsed. (When numerals are written in words, it is easy to confuse 15 with 50.) This takes Parikshit's

birth and the Kurukshetra war to around 1400 BCE. This is probably the best we can do, since we also know that the Kuru kingdom flourished between 1200 BCE and 800 BCE. To keep the record straight, archaeological material has been used to bring forward the date of the Kurukshetra war to around 900 BCE, the period of the Iron Age.

As was mentioned, in popular belief, the incidents of the Ramayana took place before the incidents of the Mahabharata. The Ramayana story also figures in the Mahabharata. However, there is no reference to any significant Mahabharata detail in the Ramayana. Nevertheless, from reading the text, one gets the sense that the Mahabharata represents a more primitive society than the Ramayana. The fighting in the Ramayana is more genteel and civilized. You don't have people hurling rocks and stones at each other, or fighting with trees and bare arms. Nor do people rip apart the enemy's chest and drink blood. The geographical knowledge in the Mahabharata is also more limited than in the Ramayana, both towards the east and towards the south. In popular belief, the Kurukshetra war occurred as a result of a dispute over land and the kingdom. That is true, in so far as the present text is concerned. However, another fight over cattle took place in the Virata Parva and the Pandavas were victorious in that too. This is not the place to expand on the argument. But it is possible to construct a plausible hypothesis that this was the core dispute. Everything else was added as later embellishments. The property dispute was over cattle and not land. In human evolution, cattle represents a more primitive form of property than land. In that stage, humankind is still partly nomadic and not completely settled. If this hypothesis is true, the Mahabharata again represents an earlier period compared to the Ramayana. This leads to the following kind of proposition. In its final form, the Mahabharata was indeed composed after the Ramayana. But the earliest version of the Mahabharata was composed before the earliest version of the Ramayana. And the events of the Mahabharata occurred before the events of the Ramayana, despite popular belief. The proposition about the feud ending with Virata Parva illustrates the endless speculation that is possible with the Mahabharata material. Did Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva ever exist? Nakula and Sahadeva have limited roles to play in the story. Arjuna's induction could have been an attempt to assert Indra's supremacy. Arjuna represents such an integral strand in the story (and of the Bhagavad Gita), that such a suggestion is likely to be dismissed out of hand. But consider the following. Droupadi loved Arjuna a little bit more than the others. That's the reason she was denied admission to heaven. Throughout the text, there are innumerable instances where Droupadi faces difficulties. Does she ever summon Arjuna for help on such occasions? No, she does not. She summons Bhima. Therefore, did Arjuna exist at all? Or were there simply two original Pandava brothers—one powerful and strong, and the other weak and useless in physical terms. Incidentally, the eighteen-parva classification is clearly something that was done much later. The 100-parva classification seems to be older.

The Mahabharata is much more real than the Ramayana. And, therefore, much more fascinating. Every conceivable human emotion figures in it, which is the reason why it is possible to identify with it even today. The text itself states that what is not found in the Mahabharata, will not be found anywhere else. Unlike the Ramayana, India is littered with real places that have identifications with the Mahabharata. (Ayodhya or Lanka or Chitrakuta are identifications that are less certain.) Kurukshetra, Hastinapura, Indraprastha, Karnal, Mathura, Dvaraka, Gurgaon, Girivraja are real places: the list is endless. In all kinds of unlikely places, one comes across temples erected by the Pandavas when they were exiled to the forest. In some of these places, archaeological excavations have substantiated the stories. The war for regional supremacy in the Ganga–Yamuna belt is also a plausible one. The Vrishnis and the Shurasenas (the Yadavas) are isolated, they have no clear alliance (before the Pandavas) with the powerful Kurus. There is the powerful Magadha kingdom under Jarasandha and Jarasandha had made life difficult for the Yadavas. He chased them away from Mathura to Dvaraka. Shishupala of the Chedi kingdom doesn't like Krishna and the Yadavas either. Through Kunti, Krishna has a matrimonial alliance with the Pandavas. Through Subhadra, the Yadavas have another matrimonial alliance with the Pandavas. Through another matrimonial alliance, the Pandavas obtain Drupada of Panchala as an ally. In the course of the royal sacrifice, Shishupala and Jarasandha are eliminated. Finally, there is yet another matrimonial alliance with Virata of the Matsya kingdom, through Abhimanyu. When the two sides face each other on the field of battle, they are more than evenly matched. Other than the Yadavas, the Pandavas have Panchala, Kashi, Magadha, Matsya and Chedi on their side. The Kouravas have Pragjyotisha, Anga, Kekaya, Sindhu, Avanti, Gandhara, Shalva, Bahlika and Kamboja as allies. At the end of the war, all these kings are slain and the entire geographical expanse comes under the control of the Pandavas and the Yadavas. Only Kripacharya, Ashvatthama and Kritavarma survive on the Kourava side.

Reading the Mahabharata, one forms the impression that it is based on some real incidents. That does not mean that a war on the scale that is described took place. Or that miraculous weapons and chariots were the norm. But there is such a lot of trivia, unconnected with the main story, that their inclusion seems to serve no purpose unless they were true depictions. For instance, what does the physical description of Kripa's sister and Drona's wife, Kripi, have to do with the main story? It is also more real than the Ramayana because nothing, especially the treatment of human emotions and behaviour, exists in black and white. Everything is in shades of grey. The Uttara Kanda of the Ramayana is believed to have been a later interpolation. If one excludes the Uttara Kanda, we generally know what is good. We know who is good. We know what is bad. We know who is bad. The Ramayana is like a clichéd Bollywood film. This is never the case with the Mahabharata. However, a qualification is necessary. Most of us

are aware of the Mahabharata story because we have read some version or the other, typically an abridged one. Every abridged version simplifies and condenses, distills out the core story. And in doing that, it tends to paint things in black and white, fitting everything into the mould of good and bad. The Kouravas are bad. The Pandavas are good. And good eventually triumphs. The unabridged Mahabharata is anything but that. It is much more nuanced. Duryodhana isn't invariably bad. He is referred to as Suyodhana as well, and not just by his father. History is always written from the point of view of the victors. While the Mahabharata is generally laudatory towards the Pandavas, there are several places where the text has a pro-Kourava stance. There are several places where the text has an anti-Krishna stance. That's yet another reason why one should read an unabridged version, so as not to miss out on these nuances. Take the simple point about inheritance of the kingdom. Dhritarashtra was blind. Consequently, the king was Pandu. On Pandu's death, who should inherit the kingdom? Yudhishthira was the eldest among the brothers. (Actually, Karna was, though it didn't become known until later.) We thus tend to assume that the kingdom was Yudhishthira's by right, because he was the eldest. (The division of the kingdom into two, Hastinapura and Indraprastha, is a separate matter.) But such primogeniture was not universally clear. A case can also be established for Duryodhana, because he was Dhritarashtra's son. If primogeniture was the rule, the eldest son of the Pandavas was Ghatotkacha, not Abhimanyu. Before both were killed, Ghatotkacha should have had a claim to the throne. However, there is no such suggestion anywhere. The argument that Ghatotkacha was the son of a rakshasa or demon will not wash. He never exhibited any demonic qualities and was a dutiful and loving son. Karna saved up a weapon for Arjuna and this was eventually used to kill Ghatotkacha. At that time, we have the unseemly sight of Krishna dancing around in glee at Ghatotkacha being killed.

In the Mahabharata, because it is nuanced, we never quite know what is good and what is bad, who is good and who is bad. Yes, there are degrees along a continuum. But there are no watertight and neat compartments. The four objectives of human existence are dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Etymologically, dharma is that which upholds. If one goes by the Bhagavad Gita, pursuit of these four are also transient diversions. Because the fundamental objective is to transcend these four, even moksha. Within these four, the Mahabharata is about a conflict of dharma. Dharma has been reduced to *varnashrama* dharma, according to the four classes (*varna*s) and four stages of life (*ashrama*s). However, these are collective interpretations of dharma, in the sense that a Kshatriya in the *garhasthya* (householder) stage has certain duties. Dharma in the Mahabharata is individual too. Given an identical situation, a Kshatriya in the garhasthya stage might adopt a course of action that is different from that adopted by another Kshatriya in the garhasthya stage, and who is to judge what is wrong and what is right? Bhishma adopted a life of celibacy. So did Arjuna, for a limited period. In that

stage of celibacy, both were approached by women who had fallen in love with them. And if those desires were not satisfied, the respective women would face difficulties, even death. Bhishma spurned the advance, but Arjuna accepted it. The conflict over dharma is not only the law versus morality conflict made famous by Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. It pervades the Mahabharata, in terms of a conflict over two different notions of dharma. Having collectively married Droupadi, the Pandavas have agreed that when one of them is closeted with Droupadi, the other four will not intrude. And if there is such an instance of intrusion, they will go into self-exile. Along comes a Brahmana whose cattle have been stolen by thieves. Arjuna's weapons are in the room where Droupadi and Yudhishthira are. Which is the higher dharma? Providing succour to the Brahmana or adhering to the oath? Throughout the Mahabharata, we have such conflicts, with no clear normative indications of what is wrong and what is right, because there are indeed no absolute answers. Depending on one's decisions, one faces the consequences and this brings in the unsolvable riddle of the tension between free will and determinism, the so-called karma concept. The boundaries of philosophy and religion blur.

These conflicts over dharma are easy to identify with. It is easy to empathize with the protagonists, because we face such conflicts every day. That is precisely the reason why the Mahabharata is read even today. And the reason one says every conceivable human emotion figures in the story. Everyone familiar with the Mahabharata has thought about the decisions taken and about the characters. Why was life so unfair to Karna? Why was Krishna partial to the Pandavas? Why didn't he prevent the war? Why was Abhimanyu killed so unfairly? Why did the spirited and dark Droupadi, so unlike the Sita of the Ramayana, have to be humiliated publicly?

It is impossible to pinpoint when and how my interest in the Mahabharata started. As a mere toddler, my maternal grandmother used to tell me stories from *Chandi*, part of the Markandeya Purana. I still vividly recollect pictures from her copy of *Chandi*: Kali licking the demon Raktavija's blood. Much later, in my early teens, at school in Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur, I first read the Bhagavad Gita, without understanding much of what I read. The alliteration and poetry in the first chapter was attractive enough for me to learn it by heart. Perhaps the seeds were sown there. In my late teens, I stumbled upon Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Krishna Charitra*, written in 1886. Bankimchandra was not only a famous novelist, he was a brilliant essayist. For a long time, *Krishna Charitra* was not available other than in Bengali. It has now been translated into English, but deserves better dissemination. A little later, when in college, I encountered Buddhadeb Bose's *Mahabharater Katha*. That was another brilliant collection of essays, first serialized in a magazine and then published as a book in 1974.

This too was originally in Bengali, but is now available in English. Unlike my sons, my first exposure to the Mahabharata story came not through television serials but comic books. Upendrakishore Raychowdhury's Mahabharata (and Ramayana) for children was staple diet, later supplanted by Rajshekhar Basu's abridged versions of both epics, written for adults. Both were in Bengali. In English, there was Chakravarti Rajagopalachari's abridged translation, still a perennial favourite. Later, Chakravarthi Narasimhan's selective unabridged translation gave a flavour of what the Mahabharata actually contained. In Bengal, the Kashiram Das version of the Mahabharata, written in the seventeenth century, was quite popular. I never found this appealing. But in the late 1970s, I stumbled upon a treasure. Kolkata's famous College Street was a storehouse of old and second-hand books in those days. You never knew what you would discover when browsing. In the nineteenth century, an unabridged translation of the Mahabharata had been done in Bengali under the editorship of Kaliprasanna Singha (1840–70). I picked this up for the princely sum of Rs 5. The year may have been 1979, but Rs 5 was still amazing. This was my first complete reading of the unabridged version of the Mahabharata. This particular copy probably had antiquarian value. The pages would crumble in my hands and I soon replaced my treasured possession with a republished reprint. Not longer after, I acquired the Aryashastra version of the Mahabharata, with both the Sanskrit and the Bengali together. In the early 1980s, I was also exposed to three Marathi writers writing on the Mahabharata. There was Iravati Karve's *Yuganta*. This was available in both English and in Marathi. I read the English one first, followed by the Marathi. The English version isn't an exact translation of the Marathi and the Marathi version is far superior. Then there was Durga Bhagwat's *Vyas Parva*. This was in Marathi and I am not aware of an English translation. Finally, there was Shivaji Sawant's *Mritunjaya*, a kind of autobiography for Karna. This was available both in English and in Marathi.

In the early 1980s, quite by chance, I encountered two shlokas, one from Valmiki's Ramayana, the other from Kalidasa's *Meghadutam*. These were two poets separated by anything between 500 to 1,000 years, the exact period being an uncertain one. The shloka in *Meghadutam* is right towards the beginning, the second shloka to be precise. It is the first day in the month of Ashada. The yaksha has been cursed and has been separated from his beloved. The mountains are covered with clouds. These clouds are like elephants, bent down as if in play. The shloka in the Valmiki Ramayana occurs in Sundara Kanda. Rama now knows that Sita is in Lanka. But the monsoon stands in the way of the invasion. The clouds are streaked with flags of lightning and garlanded with geese. They are like mountain peaks and are thundering, like elephants fighting. At that time, I did not know that elephants were a standard metaphor for clouds in Sanskrit literature. I found it amazing that two different poets separated by time had thought of elephants. And because the yaksha was pining for his beloved, the elephants were

playing. But because Rama was impatient to fight, the elephants were fighting. I resolved that I must read all this in the original. It was a resolution I have never regretted. I think that anyone who has not read *Meghadutam* in Sanskrit has missed out on a thing of beauty that will continue to be a joy for generations to come.

In the early 1980s, Professor Ashok Rudra was a professor of economics in Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. I used to teach in Presidency College, Kolkata, and we sometimes met. Professor Rudra was a left-wing economist and didn't think much of my economics. I dare say the feeling was reciprocated. By tacit agreement, we never discussed economics. Instead, we discussed Indological subjects. At that point, Professor Rudra used to write essays on such subjects in Bengali. I casually remarked, 'I want to do a statistical test on the frequency with which the five Pandavas used various weapons in the Kurukshetra war.' Most sensible men would have dismissed the thought as crazy. But Professor Rudra wasn't sensible by usual norms of behaviour and he was also a trained statistician. He encouraged me to do the paper, written and published in Bengali, using the Aryashastra edition. Several similar papers followed, written in Bengali. In 1983, I moved to Pune, to the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, a stone's throw away from BORI. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (*ABORI*) is one of the most respected journals in Indology. Professor G.B. Palsule was then the editor of *ABORI* and later went on to become Director of BORI. I translated one of the Bengali essays into English and went and met Professor Palsule, hoping to get it published in *ABORI*. To Professor Palsule's eternal credit, he didn't throw the dilettante out. Instead, he said he would get the paper refereed. The referee's substantive criticism was that the paper should have been based on the critical edition, which is how I came to know about it. Eventually, this paper (and a few more) were published in *ABORI*. In 1989, these became a book titled *Essays on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata*, published when the Mahabharata frenzy had reached a peak on television. The book got excellent reviews, but hardly sold. It is now out of print. As an aside, the book was jointly dedicated to Professor Rudra and Professor Palsule, a famous economist and a famous Indologist respectively. Both were flattered. However, when I gave him a copy, Professor Rudra said, 'Thank you very much. But who is Professor Palsule?' And Professor Palsule remarked, 'Thank you very much. But who is Professor Rudra?'

While the research interest in the Mahabharata remained, I got sidetracked into translating. Through the 1990s, there were abridged translations of the Maha Puranas, the Vedas and the eleven major Upanishads. I found that I enjoyed translating from the Sanskrit to English and since these volumes were well received, perhaps I did do a good job. With Penguin as publisher, I did a translation of the Bhagavad Gita, something I had always wanted to do. *Sarama and Her Children*, a book on attitudes towards dogs in India, also with Penguin, followed. I kept thinking about doing an unabridged translation of the Mahabharata and waited to muster up the courage. That courage now

exists, though the task is daunting. With something like two million words and ten volumes expected, the exercise seems open-ended. But why translate the Mahabharata? In 1924, George Mallory, with his fellow climber Andrew Irvine, may or may not have climbed Mount Everest. They were last seen a few hundred metres from the summit, before they died. Mallory was once asked why he wanted to climb Everest and he answered, 'Because it's there.' Taken out of context, there is no better reason for wanting to translate the Mahabharata. There is a steep mountain to climb. And I would not have dared had I not been able to stand of the shoulders of the three intellectual giants who have preceded me—Kisori Mohan Ganguli, Manmatha Nath Dutt and J.A.B. van Buitenen.

Bibek Debroy

In the second volume, we cover Sections 16 to 32 of the 100-parva classification. This completes Adi Parva (the origins), Sabha Parva (the assembly hall) and begins Aranyaka Parva (the sojourn in the forest). Arjuna is banished and the story of Sunda and Upasunda is recounted. He is married to Subhadra. Krishna and Arjuna burn down the Khandava forest. The assembly hall is built. After killing Jarasandha, the Pandavas conquer the world. Shishupala is also killed. The two games with the dice lead to the Pandavas being exiled in the forest. Kirmira is killed and Arjuna encounters Shiva. As a side story, we are told about Krishna's destruction of Soubha. Arjuna goes to Indra's abode in search of celestial weapons. The volume ends with the story of Nala and Damayanti.

Section Sixteen

Arjuna-vanavasa Parva

This parva has 298 shlokas.

Chapter 200: 23 shlokas
Chapter 201: 32 shlokas
Chapter 202: 27 shlokas
Chapter 203: 30 shlokas
Chapter 204: 30 shlokas
Chapter 205: 30 shlokas
Chapter 206: 34 shlokas
Chapter 207: 26 shlokas
Chapter 208: 21 shlokas
Chapter 209: 24 shlokas
Chapter 210: 21 shlokas

This parva has 11 chapters, Chapters 200 through 210. The word vana *means forest and the word* vasa *means to live. So this parva is about Arjuna's sojourn in the forest and begins with the reasons for his banishment. It recounts his marriage to Ulupi and Chitrangada. This parva also has the Sunda and Upasunda story.*

200

Janamejaya said, 'O one blessed with the power of austerities! All those great-souled Pandavas are my ancestors. After obtaining the kingdom of Indraprastha, what did those great-souled ones do? Those five rulers of men had a common wife in Krishna.[1] How did their lawful wife Droupadi follow their wishes? How did they, the immensely fortunate ones, prevent dissension among themselves? How did they behave with one another after they had united with Krishna? O one blessed with the power of austerities! I wish to hear all this in detail.'

Vaishampayana said, 'With Dhritarashtra's permission, the Pandavas, tigers among men and scorchers of enemies, obtained the kingdom and sported in pleasure with Krishna. Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely energetic and truthful Yudhishthira ruled over the earth in accordance with *dharma*,[2] together with his brothers. Having defeated their enemies, the immensely wise sons of Pandu, always devoted to truth and dharma, lived there in supreme happiness. Seated on extremely expensive royal thrones, those bulls among men performed all the duties towards the citizens.

'When those great-souled ones were thus seated together, *devarshi*[3] Narada,[4] who was travelling as he willed, happened to come there. Yudhishthira offered him his own excellent seat. As is prescribed, the wise Yudhishthira himself gave him offerings[5] and

once the devarshi was seated, reported the state of the kingdom. The *rishi*[6] happily accepted the homage and blessing him, asked him to be seated. Thus instructed, King Yudhishthira sat down. He sent word to Krishna that the illustrious one had arrived. Hearing this, Droupadi carefully purified herself and went to the place where Narada and the Pandavas were assembled. That follower of dharma, Drupada's daughter, paid homage at the devarshi's feet and stood before him with joined palms, appropriately covered. The illustrious Narada, supreme among rishis, always truthful and with dharma in his heart, pronounced his blessings on the unblemished princess and then asked her to leave.

'When Krishna had left, the illustrious rishi told the Pandavas, with Yudhishthira at their head, "The immensely famous daughter of Panchala[7] is a single wife to all of you, in accordance with dharma. You must lay down a rule among yourselves, lest there be dissension. In ancient times, there were two *asura*[8] brothers named Sunda and Upasunda who were famous in the three worlds.[9] They were always together and were incapable of being killed by anyone else, except each other. They ruled over the same kingdom. They lived in the same house. They slept on the same bed. They sat in the same seat. They ate off the same plate. But they killed each other over Tilottama. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, seek to protect the friendship you have for each other and act so that there is no dissension amongst you."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O great sage! Whose sons were the asuras Sunda and Upasunda? How did the dissension originate? Why did they kill each other? They killed each other over desire for Tilottama. Whose *apsara*,[10] daughter of the gods, was she? O one blessed with the power of austerities! O Brahmana! We are greatly curious and wish to hear everything in detail. Please tell us."'

201

'Narada said, "O Yudhishthira, son of Pritha![11] Then together with your brothers, listen to this ancient account, exactly as it happened. In ancient times, in the great asura Hiranyakashipu's[12] lineage, there was a powerful and energetic lord of the *daityas*[13] named Nikumba. He had two immensely valorous sons who were terrible in their prowess. They never ate unless they were together and never went anywhere without each other. They always did what was pleasurable to the other and always spoke pleasantly to the other. They were similar in behaviour and conduct; like one divided into two. Similar in action and inclination, they grew up as immensely valorous and adopted the identical resolution of conquering the three worlds. After consecration, they went to the Vindhya mountains and practised terrible austerities there. They were exhausted with hunger and thirst. Their hair was matted and they were dressed in the bark of trees. But they continued to perform austerities until they acquired powers. They

covered all their limbs with filth and lived on air. They offered their own flesh into the fire. They stood on the tips of their toes. Raising their arms and without blinking, they observed their vows for a long period. Heated by the power of the length of their austerities, an extraordinary incident occurred. The Vindhya began to belch out smoke.

'"On seeing the terrible power of their austerities, the gods were frightened. The gods created various obstacles to prevent them from attaining their vows. They repeatedly tempted them with jewels and beautiful women. But the two of them stood firm against these temptations. Then the gods used the power of Maya[14] on the two great-souls, wherein their sisters, mothers, wives and relatives, trembling and frightened, were oppressed by a *rakshasa*[15] who chased them with a spear. Their hair and ornaments were dishevelled and their garments fell loose. The women seemed to be running towards them, exclaiming, 'Save us!' But even this could not break the vows of the ones who were great in their vows. When they were not shocked or grieved at this, the women and the demon all vanished.

'"Then Brahma himself appeared before the great asuras. He who is the grandfather of all the worlds asked them to seek a boon. On seeing the god and grandfather, Sunda and Upasunda, those two brothers who were firm in their valour, stood before him with their hands joined. Together, they then spoke to the illustrious god. 'O grandfather! If you are pleased with our austerities, then may we possess the knowledge of delusion and the knowledge of all weapons. May we be strong and may we have the power to change our form at will. If the illustrious lord is pleased with us, may we be immortal.' Brahma replied, 'Except for being immortal, everything else will be the way you wish. Choose a means of death that will make you the equal of the immortals. Since you have performed these austerities with an objective in mind, the boon of immortality cannot be granted to you. You have undertaken these austerities with a view to conquering the three worlds. O, lords of the daityas! For this reason, I cannot grant you the boon that you desire.' Sunda and Upasunda said, 'O, grandfather! Then let us not face any fear from any being, anything mobile or immobile, any object in the three worlds, other than each other.' The grandfather replied, 'I can grant you this boon, the way you have wished it. Your deaths will occur the way you have indicated.' Having then granted them this boon, Brahma then asked them to refrain from austerities and returned to his world.

'"Having obtained those boons, the two brothers, the lords of the daityas, who could no longer be slain by anyone in the worlds, then returned to their home. On seeing that the great asuras had obtained the boons and were successful in getting what they desired, all their well-wishers were extremely happy. The two great asuras cut off their matted locks. They wore crowns and dressed themselves in expensive ornaments and unblemished garments. Though it was not the right season, they observed the *koumudi*[16] festival. The lords of the daityas and their well-wishers happily enjoyed themselves in

the festivities. In house after house were heard the words, ‘eat’, ‘feed’, ‘pleasure’, ‘sing’, ‘drink’ and ‘give’. There were great bouts of drinking. A roar arose from the clapping of hands. The entire city of the daityas went wild with joy. As the daityas, who could assume any form at will, sported themselves in varied amusements, many years passed. But it seemed like a single day.”’

202

‘Narada said, “When the festivities ended, the two great ones wished to conquer the three worlds. Having obtained the permission of their well-wishers and elders among the daityas, arranging their army and having sought counsel and performed the required rites, they set out in the night, when the constellation Magha[17] was in the ascendant. A large army of daityas went with them, carrying clubs, pikes, spears, all following the same dharma.[18] *Charanas*[19] sung their praises in auspicious songs that wished them victory. They set out with happiness in their hearts. The two daityas could assume any form at will and were intoxicated at the prospect of war. They rose into the sky and went to the habitation of the gods. Knowing that they were coming and aware of the boon that they had obtained from the illustrious one, the gods fled heaven[20] and went to Brahma’s world. With their terrible valour, they conquered Indra’s world and defeated masses of *yakshas*[21] and *rakshas*[22] and beings that frequent the sky. The two great asuras then vanquished the *nagas*[23] who dwell in the interior regions of the earth, all those who live in the oceans and all the *mleccha*[24] races.

‘“The two who were terrible in their rule, wished to subjugate the entire earth. They summoned their soldiers and uttered these harsh words. ‘With their great sacrifices and offerings, the *rajarshis*[25] and brahmanas increase the energy, strength and prosperity of the gods. Because of these acts, they cause injury to the asuras. Together, we must attack and completely destroy them.’ Having thus ordered them on the eastern shores of the great ocean, they set out in all directions with this cruel resolution in mind. The two powerful ones killed those who sacrificed and brahmanas who officiated at sacrifices, wherever they were seen. In hermitages of rishis who had controlled their souls, their soldiers grasped the sacrificial fires and flung them irreverently away. Because of the boon granted to them, the curses of the great-souled and angry ascetics had no effect. When the brahmanas saw that their curses had no effect, like when arrows strike stone, they gave up their vows and fled in all directions. Like snakes fleeing at the approach of Vinata’s son,[26] those on earth who were successful in austerities and were self-controlled and calm, ran away. All the hermitages were destroyed, the pots and ladles were broken and scattered. The entire universe was empty, as if it was the time of final destruction.

'"When the rajarshis and rishis disappeared into hiding, the great asuras united in their decision to kill. They changed their forms and assumed ones of mad, rutting elephants with their temples oozing, and sent those who were in inaccessible regions to Yama's abode. Sometimes they became lions and yet again, tigers. They also became invisible. With these forms, they slaughtered the rishis wherever they found them. Sacrifices and studying ceased and the brahmanas were exterminated. The earth bereft of festivals and sacrifices cried out in fear. All buying and selling ended. The worship of the gods was stopped. Sacred rites and marriages were not observed. Agriculture and the tending of cattle ended. Cities and hermitages were destroyed. Strewn with bones and skeletons, the earth was terrible to behold. Ceremonies for the ancestors were no longer observed. The sacred chants ceased. The universe was terrible and loathsome to behold. On witnessing these acts of Sunda and Upasunda, the moon, the sun, the planets, the stars, the constellations and the dwellers of heaven were depressed. Thus subjugating all the directions with their terrible acts, the two daityas lived in Kurukshetra, after vanquishing every enemy."'

203

'Narada said, "On witnessing this great destruction, all the devarshis, the *siddhas*[27] and the supreme rishis were extremely distressed. They were ones who had conquered anger, mastered their souls and senses. Stirred by compassion for the universe, they went to the grandfather's abode. There they saw the grandfather seated with the gods, surrounded by siddhas and *brahmarshis*.[28] The god Mahadeva[29] was there, with Agni[30] and Vayu.[31] The moon[32] and the sun[33] were there and Dharma and Parameshthi[34] and Budha.[35] The *vaikhanasas*[36] were there and the *valakhilyas*,[37] those who had resorted to the forest, the *marichipas*,[38] the unborn ones, those who were not deluded and other ascetics who were born from energy. All these rishis were paying homage to the grandfather. All the *maharshis*[39] went there and recounted the deeds of Sunda and Upasunda—what they had done, how they had done it, and in what order. Having recounted everything to the grandfather, all the masses of gods and the supreme rishis pressed him to act.

'"On hearing all their words, the grandfather thought for an instant, trying to decide what should be done. Determining how they might be killed, he summoned Vishvakarma.[40] When he saw Vishvakarma, the grandfather ordered, 'O, great ascetic! Create a lady who will be desired.' Paying homage to the grandfather and listening attentively to his words, he thought about it and carefully created a divine damsel. First he carefully collected whatever was beautiful in the three worlds, mobile or immobile. He placed millions of gems on her body. The divine beauty that he created was the essence of gems. She was created by Vishvakarma with a great deal of diligence and was

unmatched in beauty among all the women in the three worlds. There wasn't the tiniest part of her body that wasn't perfect in the wealth of its beauty and that failed to attract the gaze of the beholder. She was like Shri[41] herself, beautiful and desirable. She captivated the eyes and the hearts of all beings. Because she had been created bit by bit from the essence of all gems, the grandfather gave her the name of Tilottama.[42] The grandfather said, 'O Tilottama! Go to the asuras Sunda and Upasunda. O fortunate one! Seduce them with your desirable beauty. Act in a way so that you create dissension among the two of them, when they see how perfect your beauty is.' She agreed to do this.

'"Paying homage to the grandfather, she circumambulated the gods assembled there. The illustrious one[43] faced the east, Maheshvara[44] faced the south. The other gods faced the north, while all the rishis faced various directions. But while she was thus circumambulating the gods, only Indra and the illustrious god Sthanu[45] managed to maintain their composure. But so great was his[46] desire to see her as she passed by his side, that another face with eyes having curved lashes emerged from the southern side. When she went behind him, another face emerged from the western side and when she went north, another face emerged on the northern side. For the great Indra too, one thousand large and red-tinted eyes appeared everywhere, on his back and on his sides. Thus, in ancient times, Mahadeva Sthanu came to possess four faces and the slayer of Bala[47] came to possess a thousand eyes. As Tilottama walked around, all the masses of gods and the rishis turned their faces in the direction that she followed. But for the god who was the grandfather, the eyes of all the great-souled ones were on her body. When the one with richness of beauty left for her appointed task, all the gods and the supreme rishis thought that the act had already been accomplished. After Tilottama had departed, the one with the welfare of the worlds in his mind,[48] asked all the gods and the rishis to leave."'

204

'Narada said, "After conquering the earth, the two daityas had no other enemies or concerns. Having subjugated the three worlds, their desire had been attained. They were delighted at having robbed the gods, the *gandharvas*,[49] yakshas, nagas, kings and rakshas of all their gems and when they saw that they had not a single rival left, they were supremely content. Like the immortals, they gave up all endeavours and spent their time in pleasures, with women, garlands, fragrances, food, and delicacies in copious quantities, drink and various other objects that give rise to enjoyment. Like the immortals, they sported in their inner quarters, gardens, mountains and groves and in whatever region that struck their fancy.

'"One day, they went to sport in a rocky plain on the Vindhya Mountains that was dense with *shala*[50] trees crested with blossoming flowers. After every divine object of desire had been brought, the two contentedly sat on supreme seats, with beautiful women around them. Wishing to please the two, the women danced to the sound of music and delighted them with songs sung in their praise.

'"It was then that Tilottama appeared, plucking flowers in the forest. She was dressed in a single red garment, an attire that was very seductive. Gathering *karnikara* flowers along the banks of the river, she slowly approached the place where the two great asuras were. They had drunk the best of wine and their eyes were red. On seeing the one with the beautiful hips, they were struck by desire. They instantly left their seats and went to where she was. Filled with desire, they both asked for her favours. Sunda grasped the right hand of the one with the beautiful brows. Upasunda grasped Tilottama's left hand. They were intoxicated with the boon they had received, with their physical strength, with the riches and gems they possessed and with the wine they had drunk. Intoxicated with this madness and with the madness of desire, they contracted their brows and spoke to each other. 'She is my wife and your superior,' said Sunda. 'She is my wife and your sister-in-law,' replied Upasunda. In their anger, they shouted at each other, 'She is mine, not yours.' Overcome by desire for her, they grasped their terrible clubs. Uttering the words, 'I was the first,'[51] they attacked each other. Struck by those terrible clubs, both of them fell down on the ground. With blood streaming from their bodies, they looked like two suns dislodged from the sky. Then the women and the masses of daityas fled. Miserable and shuddering with fright, all of them took refuge in the nether regions.

'"Then the pure-souled grandfather arrived, with the gods and the maharshis and praised Tilottama. Brahma was pleased to grant her a boon. Delighted with her, the grandfather said, 'O, fortunate one! You will roam in the world of the *aditya*s.[52] Your energy will be so great that no one will be able to look at you for a long time.' Having granted this boon to her, the grandfather of all the worlds, instated Indra in the three worlds. The illustrious one then departed for Brahma's world.

'"Those two were always together, they were always united with the same objective. But in their anger, they killed each other over Tilottama. O, supreme among the Bharata lineage! Out of my affection for you, I am telling you, so that there is no dissension among you because of Droupadi. O, fortunate ones! If you wish to please me, act accordingly."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O, king! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled maharshi Narada, they consulted with each other and arrived at a rule, in the infinitely energetic devarshi Narada's presence. If any one of them set eyes on Droupadi when she was lying with any one of the others, he would retire to the forest and live the life of a

brahmachari[53] for twelve years. After the Pandavas, who always followed dharma, had established this rule, the great sage Narada was happy and went where he wished to go. O, descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, thus requested by Narada, they established a rule and no dissension arose between them.'

205

Vaishampayana said, 'After having established an agreement in this way, the Pandavas lived there. With the strength of their weapons, they brought under their sovereignty many kings. Krishna followed the wishes of all the five sons of Pritha, who were lions among men and immeasurable in their energy. She was extremely happy with the five valourous ones as her husbands, like Sarasvati[54] with her elephants,[55] and they were also delighted with her. Since the great-souled Pandavas abided by dharma, all the Kurus[56] increased in prosperity, were bereft of sin and were happy.

'O, lord of the earth! O, supreme among kings! After a long time had passed, thieves robbed a brahmana's cattle. When his wealth was thus stolen, the brahmana lost his senses in anger. He went to Khandavaprastha and angrily reproved the Pandavas. "O Pandavas! Mean, cruel and mindless thieves are forcibly robbing me of my wealth of cattle in your kingdom. Pursue them. The sacrificial offerings of a peaceful brahmana are being carried away by crows. The inferior jackal has invaded the deserted cave of a tiger. A brahmana's riches are being taken away by thieves. Dharma and *artha*[57] will be destroyed. I am crying for help. Take up your arms." As the miserable brahmana cried out to the Pandavas, Kunti's son Dhananjaya[58] heard his words.

'On hearing the words, the mighty-armed one told the brahmana not to fear. But Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was then lying with Krishna in the room where the great-souled Pandavas kept their weapons. The Pandava[59] was unable to enter the room. But he was also unable to go away as the wailing brahmana repeatedly urged him with his words. Kunti's son reflected in sorrow, "This ascetic brahmana's riches are being robbed. It is certainly my duty to dry his tears. If I do not protect someone who is weeping at our door, the great *adharma* of negligence will taint the king.[60] If I fail to protect, the adharma of our failing to protect will certainly be established in all the worlds. But it is also certain that if I enter the room without the permission of King Ajatashatru,[61] I will do him a great injury and I must be banished to the forest. There will either be great adharma or death in the forest. But dharma must be upheld, even if there is destruction of the body." O lord of the earth! Having thus resolved, Kunti's son Dhananjaya entered the room and took the king's permission.

'Grasping his bow, he happily told the brahmana, "O brahmana! Let us go quickly, so that those mean thieves do not go too far away and I can return your riches to you,

from the hands of the robbers." The mighty-armed one, with bow and armour and riding a chariot with flags, pierced the thieves with arrows and recovered the riches. Thus helping the brahmana and returning his riches of cattle to him, the Pandava obtained fame. The valorous Savyasachi,[62] scorcher of enemies, returned to the city. He paid his homage to all his superiors and was in turn praised by them. He then told Dharmaraja, "O, lord! Grant me permission to observe my vow. On seeing you, I have violated the rule and I must go and dwell in the forest, because that is the rule we made." On suddenly hearing these unpleasant words, Dharmaraja was afflicted by grief and in a sorrowful voice, asked, "Why?" Yudhisthira told his brother Gudakesha,[63] a brother who never suffered from decay, "O unblemised one! If I am one with authority, listen to my words. O brave one! I know all the reasons why you entered the room and caused me displeasure and I have not felt any injury. There is no sin if a younger brother enters where the elder brother is lying with his wife. However, if an elder brother enters a room where the younger brother is lying with his wife, that is improper. O mighty-armed one! Refrain, listen to my words and do as I say. Your dharma has not suffered and no injury has been done to me." Arjuna replied, "I have also heard from you that dharma must not be observed through pretences. I will not waver from the truth. The truth is my weapon." With the king's permission, he was consecrated in the rites of brahmacharya and went away to live in the forest for twelve years.'

206

Vaishampayana said, 'When the mighty-armed one who extended the fame of the Kuru lineage departed, great-souled brahmanas who knew the Vedas, were knowledgeable in the *vedangas*,[64] those who were devoted to contemplation of the supreme being, those who were immersed in the supreme lord and bards who knew the ancient tales followed him. O king! There were also raconteurs, ascetics, those who dwelt in the forests and brahmanas who read divine tales in melodious voices. Surrounded by these and many others who were skilled in recounting stories, Pandu's son travelled like Vasava[65] surrounded by the Maruts.[66] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The bull among Bharatas saw beautiful and colourful woods, lakes, rivers, oceans, countries and sacred places of pilgrimage. Reaching the source of the Ganga, the lord began to live there. O Janamejaya! Now listen, as I tell you, about the wonderful act that the pure-souled charioteer, who was foremost among the Pandus, performed.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Kunti's son lived there with the brahmanas, the brahmanas performed many *agnihotras*.[67] O king! The fires were kindled and blazed as offerings were made into them. Offerings of flowers were made on both sides of the river by the learned and great-souled ones who were always unwavering in their vows and they successfully consecrated there. As a result of this, the

source of the Ganga became extremely beautiful.

'One day, when this was going on, the son of Kunti and Pandu entered the Ganga to have a bath. O king! He performed his ablutions and offered water to his grandfathers. He was about to climb out of the water, wishing to perform rites to the fire. O great king! The mighty-armed one was grasped and pulled into the water by Ulupi, daughter of the king of the nagas, who could travel where she willed. There, in the revered palace of the naga named Kouravya,[68] the Pandava saw a fire that had been built up well. Kunti's son Dhananjaya performed his rites in that fire. Witnessing the unhesitating offering of oblations, Hutashana[69] was satisfied.

'After having performed his rites before the fire, Kunti's son smilingly uttered these words to the daughter of the naga king. "O beautiful one! O timid one! How did you perform such a courageous act? What beautiful land is this? Whom do you belong to and whose daughter are you?" Ulupi replied, "O Partha! The serpent Kouravya is descended from the lineage of Airavata. I am his daughter and a serpent named Ulupi. O Kounteya![70] I saw you descend into the water to have a bath and was robbed of my senses by the god of love.[71] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The god of love is churning me. I am yet a maiden. Please me today by giving yourself to me." Arjuna said, "O fortunate one! I have been commanded by Dharmaraja[72] to observe brahmacharya for twelve years and do not have control over myself. O dweller in the water! I do wish to do that which brings you pleasure. But never before this have I spoken that which is untrue. O serpent-maiden! How can I bring pleasure to you and yet not do that which is untrue? How can I not violate dharma?"

'Ulupi replied, "O Pandava! I know why you are roaming the earth. I know that you are observing brahmacharya on the instructions of your superior. This was the rule you made among yourselves for Drupada's daughter, that anyone deluded enough to enter would retire to the forest and observe brahmacharya for a period of twelve years. The exile is therefore for the sake of Droupadi. You are observing that dharma. But in this case, dharma does not suffer. O large-eyed one! It is your duty to save those who are distressed. By saving me, dharma is not violated. O Arjuna! Even if there is a slight transgression of dharma, by granting me life, you will achieve greater dharma. O Partha! O lord! I desire you. Desire me in return. That is the view of those who are rigid in their vows. Know that if you do not do this, I will certainly die. O mighty-armed one! Grant me life and achieve supreme dharma. O supreme among men! I am now seeking refuge with you. O Kounteya! You have always protected those who are weak and without protectors. I am miserable and weeping and am seeking refuge with you. I am overcome with desire and am seeking you. Do that which is pleasurable to me. Satisfy my desire by giving yourself to me." Hearing these words Kounteya then did what she wanted, accepting dharma to be the reason. The powerful one spent the night in the

palace of the serpent. When the sun rose, he too arose from Kouravya's abode.'

207

Vaishampayana said, 'O, descendant of the Bharata lineage! The son of the wielder of the *vajra*[73] told the brahmanas everything and left for the slopes of the Himalayas. He first went to Agastya's banyan tree and then to Vasishtha's mountain. Kounteya performed his ablutions on Bhrigu's peak. He donated a thousand cows at sacred places of pilgrimage. That supreme among Kurus gave houses to brahmanas. That supreme among men then bathed at the place of pilgrimage known as Hiranyabindu and saw the best of mountains and sacred places. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That best of men then descended, accompanied by brahmanas. That bull of the Bharata lineage then left for the eastern direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One after another, the best of the Kurus saw many places of pilgrimage and the beautiful river Utpalini in the Naimisha forest—and the famous rivers Nanda, Upananda and Koushiki, the great rivers Gaya and Ganga. Having seen all these places of pilgrimage and having purified himself, he donated riches to the brahmanas. He went to every sacred place of pilgrimage in Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. Having seen them in the proper fashion, he gave away riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he approached the gates of the kingdom of Kalinga, the brahmanas who had followed the Pandava took their leave and departed. But with their permission, Kunti's son, the valorous Dhananjaya, went on as far as the ocean, with only a few companions with him.

'Passing beyond Kalinga, the lord saw many beautiful countries, and followers of dharma. He went and saw Mahendra Mountain, adorned with ascetics. Travelling slowly along the shores of the ocean, he arrived in Manalura. Having seen all the sacred places of pilgrimage there, the mighty-armed one went to visit the king who was the lord of Manalura—King Chitravahana, who was devoted to dharma. He had a beautiful daughter named Chitrangada. When he saw Chitravahana's daughter of the beautiful hips, roaming around in the city at will, he was struck by desire. He went to the king and told him what he wished. The king then spoke to him in a placatory voice, "A king named Prabhamkara was once born in our lineage. He had no sons and performed supreme austerities for the sake of offspring. On witnessing his terrible austerities and homage, the god Mahadeva Umapati[74] Shankara was satisfied. The great lord granted him the boon that only a single offspring would be born in every generation of this lineage. Since then, in succession, only a single offspring has been born in our lineage. All my ancestors before me had sons. But a daughter was born to me and it is certain that she will have to carry forward my lineage. O supreme among men! I have always thought of her as my son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In accordance with what is prescribed, I have therefore made her my *putrika*.[75] The son, the perpetuator of this lineage, will be the bride price. O Pandava! You can take her, as long as you agree to

this condition.” Agreeing to this condition, he accepted the daughter and Kounteya lived in that city for three winters.’

208

Vaishampayana said, ‘The bull of the Bharata lineage then went to the sacred places of pilgrimage to the south, near the ocean. These sacred places were adorned with ascetics. However, these ascetics stayed away from five places of pilgrimage that had been frequented by ascetics in earlier times—Agastyatirtha, Soubhadra, the immensely purifying Poulama, the calm Karandhama that provided the fruits of a horse-sacrifice and the great *tirtha*[76] Bharadvaja, which washes away all sins. On seeing these places of pilgrimage abandoned and shunned by intelligent sages who were devoted to dharma, the Pandava who was Kuru’s descendant joined his hands in salutation and asked the ascetics, “Why have those who are learned in the *brahman* abandoned these tirthas?” The ascetics replied, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Five crocodiles live in them and drag away those who are blessed with the power of austerities. That is the reason these tirthas are abandoned.” On hearing this, the mighty-armed and valorous one, supreme among men, went to see these tirthas, though the ascetics tried to restrain him.

‘He went to Soubhadra, named after a maharshi, and supreme among tirthas. The brave one, scorcher of enemies, swiftly immersed himself to have a bath. At that, a giant crocodile that lived in the water came and grasped Kunti’s son Dhananjaya, tiger among men. But the mighty-armed Kounteya, supreme among those who are strong, seized the aquatic creature which began to struggle and got out of the water. O king! As soon as the famous Arjuna dragged the crocodile out, it turned into a beautiful woman, adorned in every ornament, radiant, charming, divine of form and alluring. On witnessing this great and extraordinary event, Kunti’s son Dhananjaya was extremely pleased and asked the lady, “O, fortunate one! Who are you and how did you come to live in the water? Why have you been committing such great sins earlier?”

‘The lady replied, “O mighty-armed one! I am an apsara who used to roam in the forests of the gods. I am the extremely powerful Varga, always the favourite of the lord of riches.[77] I had four beautiful friends, all capable of going anywhere at will. With them, I was once going to the abode of the protector of the worlds.[78] On our way, all of us saw a brahmana who was rigid in his vows. He was extremely handsome and was studying alone, in his solitude. O king! That entire forest was radiant with the energy of his austerities. Like the sun, he seemed to have illuminated that entire region. On witnessing the extraordinary sight of his terrible austerities, we descended in that region, so as to bring impediments to his pursuit of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I, Sourabheyi, Samichi, Budbuda and Lata went to the brahmana at the same time. We sang and laughed and sought to tempt the brahmana. O brave one! But he did not pay any attention to us, even for an instant. The immensely energetic and

pure one did not waver and was fixed in his austerities. O bull among kshatriyas! But the brahmana was angered and cursed us that we would become crocodiles and live in the water for a hundred years."'

209

'Varga said, "O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! We were all extremely distressed and sought the refuge of the brahmana, who was blessed with the power of austerities and never decayed. We said, 'O brahmana! The god of love made us arrogant because of our youth and beauty. We did what should not be done. Please forgive us. That we had come to tempt a self-controlled one blessed with the power of austerities, who is rigid in his vows, is sufficient death for us. Those who think about dharma are of the view that women should not be slain. You are learned in dharma and because of that dharma, do not kill us. O you who are learned in dharma! It is said that a brahmana is a friend to all beings. Let this saying of the learned come true and bring welfare. Those who are good protect those who seek their refuge. We have sought refuge with you. You should therefore forgive us.'"'

Vaishampayana said, 'O brave one! At these words the brahmana, the performer of good deeds and with dharma in his soul, and as resplendent as the sun and the moon, was pacified. The brahmana said, "The words hundreds, thousands and forever are always used to indicate eternity. But the word hundred used by me should be understood as a limited period and not as eternity. Becoming crocodiles, you will seize and drag men down into the water. But a supreme man will drag you out of the water and onto land and you will then regain your earlier forms. Never before have I uttered a falsehood, not even in jest. From now on, all these tirthas will be famous everywhere as the tirthas of women. Those who are learned will know them to be sacred and the cleansers of all sins."

'Varga said, "We then paid our homages to the brahmana and circumambulated him. We left that region in misery, thinking, 'When and how soon will we meet the man who will return our earlier forms?' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While we were thus thinking, the immensely fortunate devarshi Narada appeared instantly before us. O Partha! On seeing the devarshi whose radiance is infinite, all of us were filled with joy. Paying our homages to him, we stood there, with misery on our faces. He asked us the reason for our sorrow and we told him everything. Having heard exactly what had happened, he spoke to us. 'There are five tirthas in the southern marshes of the ocean. They are sacred and beautiful. Go there immediately and live there. Pandava Dhananjaya, tiger among men, pure of soul, will certainly arrive there soon and free you from your misery.' O brave one! On hearing these words, all of us came here. O unblemished one! It is true that you have set me free today. But my four friends are still there in the other waters. O brave one! Perform a good deed and set them all free."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! Then the brave one, the best of the Pandavas, happily freed them all from that curse. O king! On ascending from the waters, the apsaras regained their own forms and looked as they had earlier. Purifying those tirthas and permitting them to leave, the lord went to the city of Manalura to see Chitrangada again. Through her, he had given birth to a son named King Babhruvahana. O king! Having seen him, the Pandava left for Gokarna.'

210

Vaishampayana said, 'Then, one after another, the immensely powerful one visited all the other tirthas that were to the west and all those that were on the shores of the western ocean. Having visited them, he reached Prabhasa. When Madhusudana[79] heard that the invincible Bibhatsu[80] had reached the region of Prabhasa after visiting all the tirthas, Madhava[81] went to meet him, unknown to Kounteya. Krishna and Pandava saw each other in Prabhasa. They embraced each other and asked about each other's welfare. Then the beloved friends, who were like the rishis Nara and Narayana of yore,[82] sat down in the forest.

'Then Vasudeva asked Arjuna about what he had been up to and about why the Pandava was visiting all the tirthas. Thereupon, Arjuna recounted to him exactly what had happened. On hearing this, the lord Varshneya[83] approved. As they desired, Krishna and Pandava sported themselves in Prabhasa. They then went to the mountain Raivataka, to live there for some time. On Krishna's instructions, men had already decorated the mountain and stored it with a lot of food. Accepting everything that was offered, Pandava Arjuna, together with Vasudeva, watched the actors and dancers. Having given them permission to leave in accordance with the proper form, the immensely radiant Pandava went to sleep on a well-made and divine bed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He told Satvata[84] about the tirthas, mountains, rivers and forests he had seen. O Janamejaya! As he was thus speaking, lying on a bed that was like heaven, sleep crept up on Kounteya. He was awakened in the morning, with the sweet sounds of singing and the sounds of the *veena*,[85] chants and blessings. After he had performed the necessary acts, Varshneya greeted him happily.

'Riding on a golden chariot, they set off for Dvaraka. O Janamejaya! In order to pay homage to Kunti's son, even the huts of Dvaraka had been decorated. The citizens of Dvaraka were eager to see Kounteya and came out in hundreds and thousands onto the road followed by kings. There was a great common assemblage of Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas and hundreds and thousands of their women looked on. Having been respectfully worshipped by all the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas, he returned homage to those who deserved it, and was welcomed by everyone. All the young men paid their respects to the brave one, in the proper form. Those who were of his own age, embraced

him again and again. With Krishna, he spent many nights in Krishna’s beautiful home, full of jewels and every object of pleasure.’

Section Seventeen

Subhadra-harana Parva

This parva has fifty-seven shlokas and two chapters.

Chapter 211: 25 shlokas
Chapter 212: 32 shlokas

The word harana *means abduction. So this parva is about Subhadra's abduction. This is a very short parva.*

211

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! After a few days, the great festival of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas was held on Mount Raivataka. The warriors gave away gifts to thousands of brahmanas in that festival of the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas on that mountain. O king! The region all around the mountain was adorned with palaces full of jewels. Every tree there was decorated with lamps. Together, all the musicians played their musical instruments, the dancers danced, and the singers sang songs. All the immensely energetic Vrishni youth were adorned with ornaments, as they rode on their colourful and golden chariots. Hundreds and thousands of citizens went there with their wives, some on excellent chariots and others on foot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Revati, the lord Haladhara[1] was intoxicated and was followed by many *gandharvas*.[2] The powerful Ugrasena, king of the Vrishnis, was there with his one thousand wives and was praised by the musicians. Rukmini's son[3] and Samba, always invincible in battle, were intoxicated and wore divine garlands and garments, sporting themselves like the gods. Akrura, Sarana, Gada, Bhanu, Viduratha, Nishatha, Charudeshna, Prithu, Viprithu, Satyaka, Satyaki, Bhangakara, Sahachara, Hardikya, Kritavarma and others not mentioned were there, surrounded by their respective wives and musicians. They then adorned Raivataka at the time of the festival.

'While this greatly wonderful commotion was going on, Vasudeva roamed around, Partha[4] with him. As they wandered, they saw Vasudeva's[5] beautiful daughter Bhadra, ornamented, and with her friends. On seeing her, Arjuna was struck by the god of love and Krishna noticed the signs that Partha's mind was intently riveted on her. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The one with the eyes of a lotus smilingly spoke these words, "How is it that the mind of one who lives in the forest is agitated by desire? O Partha! She is my sister and from the same womb as Sarana.[6] If your mind is set on her, I can speak to my father myself." Arjuna replied, "She is Vasudeva's daughter and Vasudeva's sister. She is beautiful. How can I not be captivated? If this daughter of the

Vrishni lineage, your sister, becomes my wife, I must certainly have performed only good deeds. O Janardana![7] Tell me how I can obtain her. I will do everything that any man can." Vasudeva said, "O bull among men! A *svayamvara*[8] is the form of marriage for kshatriyas. O Partha! But that is uncertain if one doesn't know the inclination. Those who are learned in the ways of dharma say that for kshatriyas, who are warriors, abduction for marriage is permissible. O Arjuna! Therefore, abduct my beautiful sister. Who knows what she might do in a svayamvara?"

'O king! Having thus decided on the course of action, Arjuna and Krishna then sent off swift men as messengers, to inform Dharmaraja in Indraprastha of everything. On hearing, the mighty-armed Pandava[9] agreed.'

212

Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! Dhananjaya[10] learnt that the lady had gone to Raivataka. Having learnt of the sanction[11] and after obtaining Vasudeva's permission, the bull of the Bharata lineage discussed and got Krishna's sanction about the course of action. He mounted a golden chariot that had been constructed in the proper fashion. It was yoked with Sainya and Sugriva[12] and decorated with nets of small bells. Its roar was like that of a thundering cloud and it was stocked with every weapon. Its radiance was like the blazing fire and it struck terror in the hearts of enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prepared, armoured with a sword and with guards on his elbows and fingers, he set out as if on a hunt.

'Having worshipped Raivata, king of the mountains, and obtained the blessings of the gods and all the brahmanas, Subhadra circumambulated the mountain and set out for Dvaraka. Kunti's son rushed at her and forced her onto his chariot. Abducting the sweet-smiling one, that tiger among men set out for his own city on his chariot, as if on air. On seeing Subhadra thus carried away, all the armed soldiers who were with her raised an alarm and dashed towards the city of Dvaraka. They arrived at the assembly hall named Sudharma and recounted the story of Partha's valour to the presiding officer.[13] On hearing this, the presiding officer sounded his war drum, one that was ornamented with gold and had a terrible roar. On hearing that sound, the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas then gave up their food and drink and came to the assembly hall.

'Those tigers among men, the Vrishni and Andhaka *maharathas*[14] ascended their thrones, decorated with gold, covered with excellent cushions and adorned with gems and corals, with the radiance of blazing fires, like a hundred fires on their sacrificial altars. When they were seated like an assembly of gods, the presiding officer and his companions told them about Jishnu's[15] conduct. On hearing this, the warriors among the Vrishnis, their eyes red with drinking, were intolerant of Partha and arrogantly

stood up. "Quickly yoke the chariots, bring our lances, fetch the best bows and large armour." Some asked their charioteers to yoke their chariots. Others themselves fetched their horses, harnessed in gold. As the chariots, armour and flags were brought, there was then a tumultuous uproar from those warriors among men.

'At that time, Vanamali,[16] who was as tall as Mount Kailasha, who was intoxicated with wine and was dressed in blue, spoke, "O you who are not wise! What are you doing when Janardana is quiet? Without knowing what his thoughts are, why are you roaring in anger? Let the immensely wise one say what he intends to do. Whatever he proposes should be unhesitatingly done." On hearing Halayudha's[17] words, which deserved to be accepted, all of them exclaimed "excellent" and fell silent. Silence having been restored through the wise Baladeva's calm words, all of them again took their seats in the assembly hall. Then Kamapala[18] spoke to Vasudeva, the scorcher of enemies. "O Janardana! Why are you seated here and looking on without a word? O Achyuta![19] It was for your sake that we honoured Arjuna. It now seems that evil-minded one, the defiler of his lineage, did not deserve the homage and honour. Will any man who regards himself as having been born in a good lineage break the plate that he has eaten from? Even if one has wished for such an alliance, should a supplicant who desires happiness have the courage to act thus, forgetting earlier favours? By insulting us and disregarding Keshava,[20] he has forcibly abducted Subhadra, summoning his own death. O Govinda![21] Like a serpent that has been trodden on, how can I bear him who has placed his feet on my head? Today, I will alone rid the earth of all Kouravas. I cannot tolerate this transgression of Arjuna's." At this, all the assembled Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas applauded the thundering one, whose voice was like the clouds and a war drum.'

Section Eighteen

Harana Harika Parva

This parva has eighty-two shlokas and only one chapter. The word harana means abduction. It also means gifts. Harika *means conveying or giving. So this parva is about Subhadra's abduction and the giving of gifts that followed.*

213

Vaishampayana said, 'When all the Vrishnis began to repeat words of this nature, Vasudeva uttered words that were full of dharma and artha. "Gudakesha[1] has not brought dishonour to our lineage through his actions. There is no doubt that he has increased it.[2] Partha[3] knows that the Satvatas[4] never lust after riches. The Pandava also knows that the results of a svayamvara are uncertain. Who can contemplate the giving away of a daughter, as if she were an animal? Which man on earth would like to sell his daughter? I think Kunti's son saw these blemishes in the other methods. Therefore, in accordance with dharma, the Pandava abducted the lady. This alliance is appropriate. Subhadra is illustrious, Partha is equally so. Hence he abducted her by force. Who will not want Arjuna? He is born in the lineage of Bharata and the great-souled Shantanu. He is the son of Kuntibhoja's daughter. In all the worlds, with their Indras and Rudras, I do not see anyone who can vanquish Partha with valour, with that chariot to which my horses have now been yoked. As a warrior, Partha is swift in the use of weapons. Who is his equal? Go to Dhananjaya with a happy mind. Pacify him with extremely gentle words and make him come back. That is my view. If Partha goes to his city after forcibly vanquishing us, our fame will be destroyed. But there is no defeat in appeasement." O ruler of men! On hearing Vasudeva's words, they acted accordingly.

'Restrained by them, Arjuna returned and married Subhadra. Kunti's son lived there for a year and the lord spent the last part of his period[5] in Pushkara.

'After the twelve years were over, he went to Khandavaprastha. He went to the king[6] and humbly paid his respects. Partha worshipped the brahmanas and went to Droupadi. Then, out of love,[7] Droupadi told Kuru's descendant, "O Kunti's son! Go to the daughter of the Satvatas. A second load always loosens the first tie, however strong." Krishna[8] thus lamented in many ways. Dhananjaya pacified her a lot and asked for forgiveness. He quickly went to Subhadra, who was dressed in red silk. Partha sent her away to dress in garments worn by a cowherd lady. But the illustrious one looked beautiful even in that attire. Arriving in the best of houses, the famous and beautiful Bhadra, wife of a

warrior, with copper-red eyes, paid homage to Pritha. Then, with a face as radiant as the full moon, Bhadra quickly went and paid homage to Droupadi, saying, "I am your maid." Then Krishna arose and embraced Madhava's[9] sister and lovingly said, "Let your husband not have a rival." With a happy heart, Bhadra replied, "May it be that way." O Janamejaya! The maharatha Pandavas were then happy in their hearts. Kunti was also extremely delighted.

'Having heard that Arjuna, the best of the Pandavas, had reached Indraprastha, supreme among cities, the pure-souled Pundarikaksha[10] Madhava went there with Rama[11] and all the other warriors and maharathas from among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Shouri, scorcher of enemies, went with a large army, surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and his brothers and sons. The immensely famous and wise Akrura, lord of donations of alms, vanquisher of enemies and general of the Vrishni warriors, went there. So did the immensely energetic Anadhrishti and the immensely famous Uddhava, the greatly intelligent and famous disciple of Brihaspati himself. Satyaka, Satyaki, the Satvata Kritavarma, Pradyumna, Samba, Nishatha, Shanku, the valorous Charudeshna, Jhilli, Viprithu, mighty-armed Sarana and Gada, supreme among those who are learned—these and many other Vrishnis, Bhojas and Andhakas went to Khandavaprastha, carrying many gifts with them. On hearing that Madhava had come, King Yudhishthira sent the twins[12] to receive Krishna. Having been received by them, the prosperous Vrishnis entered Khandavaprastha, which was adorned with flags and pennants. The roads were cleaned and sprinkled with water and decorated with many flowers. Cool sandalwood and the fragrance of other pure perfumes and the burning of aloe made every part of the city fragrant. The entire city was crowded with merchants and with people who had cleansed themselves.

'The mighty-armed Keshava, supreme among men, arrived with Rama, surrounded by Vrishnis, Andhakas and the great Bhojas. He was worshipped by thousands of citizens and brahmanas. He then entered the king's palace, which was like Purandara's[13] abode. Yudhishthira welcomed Rama in the prescribed fashion. He kissed Keshava on the head[14] and embraced him in his arms. Extremely pleased, Krishna humbly paid homage and duly paid his respects to Bhima, tiger among men.[15] In accordance with the prescribed rites, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira welcomed the best of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. He worshipped some as his superiors. He greeted some as his equals. He welcomed some others with affection and was paid homage to by others.[16]

'Then the immensely famous Vasudeva presented the best of riches to the groom's party and as dowry to Subhadra from her relatives, one thousand golden chariots with nets of bells, each yoked to four horses and driven by skilled charioteers. From the land of Mathura, Krishna gave one thousand auspiciously coloured cows that were productive in yielding milk. As a sign of friendship, Janardana gave one thousand horses that were

white like the colour of moonbeams and were adorned with gold; two times five hundred mules, white with black manes, that were trained and had the speed of the wind; one thousand young and fair women who were well dressed and had excellent complexions. Each wore a necklace of one hundred gold pieces, was adorned with ornaments and was skilled in bathing and every kind of service. The lotus-eyed Janardana gave ten man-loads of gold, both worked and unworked and with the radiance of the fire, from the land of Dasarha. As a mark of respect, the lover of valour, Rama, gave Partha one thousand supreme elephants in rut. These were as large as mountain peaks and had secretions flowing from their bodies in three streams. They never retreated in battle and were adorned with well-crafted, golden bells and were supremely saddled. Haladhara was happy and pleased with the alliance. The large quantity of gems and riches looked like an ocean. The garments and blankets were like the foam, the large elephants were like large crocodiles and the flags were like aquatic plants. This large river[17] entered into the ocean of the Pandus and filled it up to the brim, to the great despondency of their enemies.

'Dharmaraja Yudhishthira accepted all of it and paid homage to the Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas. Then the assembled great-souled ones, the best of the Kuru, Vrishni and Andhaka lineages, spent their time in pleasure, as do men of good deeds in the abode of the immortals. The Kurus and the Vrishnis amused themselves as they wished, with the loud clapping of hands and drinking bouts. Having spent many days in pleasure and being worshipped by the Kurus, the brave ones again returned to the city of Dvaravati. With Rama at their forefront, the maharathas from the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages departed, with the pure jewels given to them by the best of the Kurus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But the great-souled Vasudeva remained with Arjuna in the beautiful city of Shakraprastha.[18] He roamed with Partha along the banks of the Yamuna.

'Then Keshava's beloved sister Subhadra gave birth to radiant Soubhadra, like Poulomi gave birth to Jayanta.[19] He was long-armed, of great strength, with the eyes of a bull and a vanquisher of enemies. Subhadra's brave son, a bull among men, was known as Abhimanyu. Arjuna's son, a bull among men, was thus known because he was extremely wrathful.[20] Dhananjaya gave birth to that *atiratha*[21] from a Satvata lady, like fire is produced at a sacrifice from the womb of a *shami*[22] tree. At his birth, Kunti's son, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira, donated ten thousand cows and several thousand coins to brahmanas. From his childhood, he became a favourite of Vasudeva's and was like a moon to all his fathers[23] and the subjects. From his birth onwards, Krishna performed all the auspicious rites. The child began to grow, like the moon in the bright half of the lunar month. That vanquisher of enemies learned all the vedas from Arjuna, with the four divisions and the ten branches, and the art of archery, everything known to man

and god. That extremely powerful one became skilled in the science of all weapons. He learnt all the special acts of handling weapons. In acquisition, use and in circular motions, Dhananjaya was pleased that his son Soubhadra became his equal. He could bear everything from his enemies. He was blessed with all the auspicious marks. He was invincible in battle and had the shoulders of a bull. His wide mouth was like that of a serpent. The mighty archer was as proud as a lion. His valour was like that of a mad elephant. His voice was like thunderous clouds. His face was like that of the full moon. He was Krishna's equal in valour, energy, beauty and form. Bibhatsu[24] saw in his son Maghavan[25] himself.

'The auspicious Panchali[26] also obtained five sons through her five husbands. They were brave and bright, like five mountains—Prativindhya was born from Yudhishthira, Sutasoma from Vrikodara,[27] Shrutakarman from Arjuna, Shatanika from Nakula and Shrutasena from Sahadeva. They were five maharathas. Panchali gave birth to five heroes, like Aditi gave birth to the Adityas. The brahmanas told Yudhishthira that according to the sacred texts, Prativindhya would be like the Vindhya mountains in knowledge of the weapons of his enemies and so he should be thus named.[28] The great archer Sutasoma, with energy equal to that of the sun and the moon, was born as a son from Bhimasena after he had performed one thousand *soma*[29] sacrifices.[30] Shrutakarman was born as a son after hearing of the great deeds performed by Kiriti.[31] Kourava Nakula, descendant of the Kuru lineage, named his son, who would extend his fame, after the royal sage Shatanika. Then Krishna gave birth to Sahadeva's son when the nakshatra Vahnidaivata was in the ascendant. He was therefore known as Shrutasena.[32] Droupadi's famous sons were born at intervals of one year. O lord of kings! They were devoted to each other's welfare. O best of the Bharata lineage! As is prescribed, from the time of birth, their rituals of birth, tonsure and wearing of the sacred thread were performed by Dhoumya.[33] After having studied the vedas, these observers of rigid vows learnt the use of all weapons, human and divine, from Arjuna. O tiger among kings! Followed by mighty and broad-chested sons who were like those born from the wombs of the gods, the Pandavas were extremely delighted.'

Section Nineteen

Khandava-daha Parva

This parva has 344 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 214: 32 shlokas
Chapter 215: 19 shlokas
Chapter 216: 34 shlokas
Chapter 217: 22 shlokas
Chapter 218: 50 shlokas
Chaper 219: 40 shlokas
Chapter 220: 32 shlokas
Chapter 221: 21 shlokas
Chapter 222: 18 shlokas
Chapter 223: 25 shlokas
Chapter 224: 32 shlokas
Chapter 225: 19 shlokas

The word daha *means to burn and, as a noun, also means a fire or a conflagration in the forest. So this parva is about the burning of the Khandava forest by Arjuna and Krishna. It has also stories of the survivors, Ashvasena, Maya and the Sharngaka birds.*

214

Vaishampayana said, 'On the orders of King Dhritarashtra and those of Shantanu's son,[1] they lived in Indraprastha and brought under their rule many kings. All the people lived happily in Dharmaraja's refuge, like souls in bodies that have auspicious marks and perform deeds.[2] That bull among Bharatas[3] served dharma, artha and kama equally, looking upon the three as relatives, like one's own self. It was as if dharma, artha and kama had become personified on earth and with them, the king became like a fourth.[4] The vedas found a great student, the sacrifices a great performer and the castes[5] a pure protector in this ruler of men. Lakshmi[6] was established. Intelligence was revered. Dharma found a relative everywhere and extended on earth. With his four brothers, the king shone with radiance, like a great sacrifice assisted by the four vedas. Dhoumya and other brahmanas surrounded him and paid homage, like the chief immortals, each equal to Brihaspati, worshipers of Prajapati.[7] In the eyes and the hearts of the subjects, owing to their great affection, Dharmaraja was equal to the unblemished full moon. The subjects didn't love him only because he was their king. They also bore him affection because of his deeds. Pritha's intelligent son was always sweet in speech. He never uttered words that were improper, untrue, malicious or unpleasant. The immensely energetic and supreme one of the Bharata lineage found pleasure in devoting himself to

the welfare of all the worlds, treating everyone like his own self. Through their great energy, all the Pandavas lived happily, devoid of distress, pacifying all the kings.

'After a few days, Bibhatsu told Krishna, "O Krishna! Warm days are here. Let us go towards the Yamuna. O Madhusudana! O Janardana! If you agree, let us sport there with our friends and return in the evening." Vasudeva replied, "O Kunti's son! O Pritha's son! That is my wish too. As long as we desire, let us sport with our friends in the water." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After consulting and obtaining Dharmaraja's permission, Partha, Govinda and their friends set out.

'They reached that beautiful pleasure ground, dotted with many trees and adorned with many tall houses, like Purandara's[8] abode. Flavoured and expensive food and drinks were spread out and many perfumed garlands were adorned for Varshneya[9] and Partha. They entered the place that was stocked with many pure and brilliant gems. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them began to sport as they pleased. Some women sported in the woods, others in the water and some others in the houses, wherever it pleased Krishna and Partha. In great intoxication, Droupadi and Subhadra gave away expensive garments and ornaments to the women. Some danced in great delight, others shouted. Some of the women laughed, others drank the excellent wine. Some began to weep, others fought among themselves. Some whispered secrets to each other and jested. The woods became the scene of prosperity, filled all around with the beautiful music of flutes, veenas and drums.

'While this was going on, the descendants of Kuru and Dasharha[10] went to a beautiful region that was not far off. O king! Having gone there, the two great-souled Krishnas,[11] conquerors of enemy cities, seated themselves on very expensive seats. Partha and Madhava amused themselves by recounting to each other the many deeds of valour and love they had performed earlier. When Vasudeva and Dhananjaya were thus happily seated together, like the two Ashvins[12] in heaven, a brahmana arrived. He was like a tall shala tree and his complexion was like heated gold. His beard was reddish brown and his limbs were well proportioned. His hair was matted and his attire was dark. He was radiant like the young sun[13] and his eyes were like lotus leaves. His complexion was tawny and he blazed with energy. On seeing that supreme among brahmanas approach, the two Krishnas, Arjuna and Vasudeva, quickly stood up.'

215

Vaishampayana said, 'He then spoke to Arjuna and Vasudeva of the Satvata lineage. "You two, who are now so near the Khandava tract, are supreme in the world. I am a voracious brahmana who always eats unlimited quantities. O descendants of Vrishni and Pritha! I beg you. Give me enough food to satisfy myself." Having been thus addressed, Krishna and Pandava told him, "Tell us what kind of food will satisfy you. We will try to

bring it for you."

'Having been thus addressed, the illustrious brahmana then told the warriors, who had asked him about the kind of food that should be prepared for him, "I do not eat ordinary food. Know me to be the fire. Therefore, seek to bring me the food that is appropriate for me. This Khandava tract is always protected by Indra. So I am unable to burn it down because that great-souled one protects it. His friend, the naga Takshaka lives there with his kin and is protected by the wielder of the vajra and many other beings are also incidentally protected. Though I always wish to burn it down, I cannot do so because of Shakra's[14] energy. Whenever he sees me ablaze, he pours down floods of rain from the clouds. Though I earnestly wish to consume it, I cannot thus burn it down. Since the two of you are skilled in the use of arms, I have now come to you for help. I will now be able to burn Khandava down and that is the food I desire from you. You know about supreme weapons. Restrain the showers on all sides. Restrain all the creatures."[15] On hearing these words, Bibhatsu told the fire, who wished to burn down Khandava, despite being restrained by Shatakratu.[16] "I have many excellent and divine weapons with which I am capable of fighting many wielders of the vajra. O illustrious one! But I do not possess a bow that can bear the strength of my arms and withstand the strength and speed I bring to battle. Because of my speed, I need arrows that are inexhaustible. My chariot cannot bear all the arrows that I desire. I want divine horses that are white and as swift as the wind. And a chariot that will shine like the sun in its energy and will thunder like the clouds. Nor does Krishna possess a weapon that can equal his valour and Madhava requires one to kill the nagas and demons[17] in battle. O illustrious one! Tell us the means so that we may be successful and are able to restrain Indra from raining down on this extensive forest. O fire! We are ready to act according to our prowess. O illustrious one! But you should give us the means that can support us."'

216

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the illustrious fire, with the smoke as his banner, remembered Varuna, the lord of the worlds, Aditi's son and the god who lives in the water and is the lord of the waters. Knowing that he had been remembered, he too appeared before the fire. The smoke-crested one paid homage to the lord of the waters, the fourth lokapala,[18] the protector and the great god and said, "Quickly give me the bow, the two quivers and the chariot bearing the flag of a monkey that were obtained from King Soma. Partha will accomplish a great task with Gandiva[19] and Vasudeva with the *chakra*.[20] For that reason, let those be given to them." Varuna told the fire, "I will give them." Then he gave him that extraordinary gem of a bow, endowed with great valour and capable of extending fame and deeds. It was incapable of being hurt by any weapon, but could destroy all weapons. It was the chief of all

weapons and was the destroyer of enemy armies. It alone was equal to one hundred thousand and was the extender of kingdoms. It was radiant, smooth and unblemished everywhere and adorned with many colours. For an eternity, it had been worshipped by the gods, the danavas and the gandharvas. He also gave him two inexhaustible quivers and a chariot with divine horses, with a monkey on the banner. The horses were silvery and were from the land of the gandharvas. They were in golden harnesses, as swift as the wind or the mind, and resembled white clouds. Every weapon was laden onto the chariot and it was incapable of being vanquished by the gods or the danavas. It was radiant, with a thunderous roar and was enchanting to all beings. Through his ascetic powers, it was created by Prajapati Bhoumana,[21] the lord of the worlds. Its form was like that of the sun and could not be gazed at. It was on this that Lord Soma had ascended when he vanquished the danavas. It was radiant in its beauty and was gigantic, like an elephant or a cloud. On this supreme of chariots was mounted an excellent flagpole, golden and resplendent like Shakra's weapon. On the flagpole was a divine monkey marked with the signs of the lion and the tiger. It seemed to roar out from that adorned perch. There were many other great beings on that flag and their roars made enemy soldiers lose their senses.

'Then Partha circumambulated that supreme chariot, adorned with many pennants. He worshipped all the gods and attired in armour, with guards for his fingers and wrists, and with a sword slung against his chest, ascended it, like a virtuous man on a *vimana*.[22] Arjuna was extremely delighted when be grasped the Gandiva, the divine and supreme of bows, created by Brahma in ancient times. Paying his homage to the fire, the valorous one grasped the bow with great force and strung it. When the powerful Pandava strung the bow, the hearts of those who heard the sound trembled. Having obtained the chariot, the bow and the two inexhaustible quivers, Kounteya thought himself to be powerful and accomplished for the task. Then the fire gave Krishna the chakra, with a vajra at its centre. On receiving this fiery and desirable weapon, he too became accomplished. The fire said, "O Madhusudana! There is no doubt that with this weapon you will be victorious in battle, even over those who are not human. It is certain that in the destruction of great enemies—humans, gods, rakshasas, pishachas, daityas, nagas—you will be the superior in battle. O Madhava! Whenever you hurl it at an enemy in the course of battle, it will irresistibly kill and return again to your hand." The illustrious Varuna also gave Hari a terrible club named Koumadaki,[23] the destroyer of daityas, with the roar of the thunder.

'The delighted Krishna and Arjuna told the fire, "O illustrious one! We are now armed with weapons and know their use. We are mounted on chariots with flags. We are eager to fight all the gods and demons together, not to speak of a single wielder of the vajra who wishes to fight for the sake of a naga." Arjuna said, "O fire! When the powerful Varshneya releases the chakra in battle, there is nothing in the three worlds that

Janardana cannot vanquish. Having obtained the bow Gandiva and these two inexhaustible quivers, I am also capable of vanquishing the worlds in battle. O lord! Blaze as you wish and encircle this great forest. We are capable of helping you in your task." Having been thus addressed by Dasharha and Arjuna, the illustrious one assumed his energetic form and began to consume the forest. He surrounded it from all sides with his seven flames. As terrible as the fire at the end of a *yuga*, he began to angrily consume Khandava. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When he surrounded the forest from all sides, he roared like the clouds and burnt all the beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The blazing forest looked like Meru, king of the mountains, golden in its great radiance.'

217

Vaishampayana said, 'Those two tigers among men stationed themselves on their chariots on both sides of the forest and a great slaughter of all beings began in every direction. Wherever they saw a creature that dwelt in Khandava trying to escape, those two heroes pursued it. No hole could be seen in the swift power of the chariots.[24] Those two excellent chariots and the two charioteers seemed to be as one. As Khandava blazed, thousands of beings leapt in the ten[25] directions, uttering frightened yells. Some were burnt in one spot. Some were scorched. The eyes burst out for some. Some withered away. Some lost their minds and scattered. Some clung to their sons, others to their fathers and mothers. Out of affection, they were unable to let go and perished. Others rose up in their thousands, their forms distorted. But they were whirled around and again flung into the fire. Some rolled on the ground, their wings, eyes and feet scorched. They were seen there, their bodies destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the waterbodies began to boil. In their thousands, the turtles and the fishes were seen dead. In that destruction of beings in the forest, the burning bodies seemed like flaming torches. Those that ascended upwards were cut to pieces by Partha's arrows, as he laughingly flung them back into the flames. Uttering loud wails, their bodies pierced everywhere by arrows, from above, they were swiftly flung back again into the fire. Pierced by arrows and in flames, the sounds made by the forest-dwellers was heard, like the ocean when it was churned. The huge flames of the delighted fire rose up into the sky and created great consternation among the dwellers of heaven. They sought refuge with the thousand-eyed Purandara,[26] the king of the gods. The gods said, "O lord of the immortals! Why is the fire burning all these people? Is it the case that the end of the worlds has arrived?" Having heard this, the slayer of Vritra[27] himself looked down.

'Harivahana[28] set out to save Khandava. Covering the sky with a great mass of clouds in many forms, the lord of the gods and the wielder of the vajra began to pour down rain. The thousand-eyed one showered down rain on the fire raging in Khandava from

hundreds and thousands of clouds, in shafts as thick as the axles.[29] But the heat of the fire dried up these showers before they reached. Not a single one reached the fire. Then the slayer of Namuchi[30] became very angry with the fire. He again started to rain down, in many torrents. Then the flames fought with those showers, mingled with smoke and lightning. With the sound of the roar, that forest became terrible to look at.'

218

Vaishampayana said, 'Summoning his splendid weapons, Pandava Bibhatsu, repulsed the shower of rain with a shower of arrows. Pandava covered every side of Khandava with his arrows and drove away that rain from that forest. When the sky was covered with Savyasachi's arrows, not a single being could escape from there.

'Takshaka, the immensely powerful king of the serpents, wasn't in the flaming forest then. He had gone to Kurukshetra. But Takshaka's powerful son Ashvasena was there. He made great efforts to escape from the fire. However, oppressed by Kounteya's arrows, he didn't succeed in getting out. But his mother, daughter of the serpents, tried to save him. She first swallowed his head. Then she began to swallow his tail and in her haste to save her son, the serpent lady rose up. When Pandava saw this, he sliced off her head with a sharp arrow.[31] The lord of the gods saw this. Acting as saviour, the wielder of the vajra unleashed a shower of rain on Pandava and when this dazed him, Ashvasena instantly escaped. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing this terrible power of maya and having been deprived by the serpent, he cut down all the serpents into two and three pieces. Angrily, Bibhatsu cursed the serpent that had escaped and so did the fire and Vasudeva, to the effect that he would never attain fame.

'Then Jishnu remembered the deception that had been played on him. He was angered and seeking to fight with the thousand-eyed one, covered the sky with his sharp arrows. On seeing Phalguna's[32] wrath, the king of the gods unleashed his own blazing missile and it flashed across the entire sky. Then winds with terrible roars churned all the oceans. Masses of clouds, mingled with torrents of rain, were created. To counter them, Arjuna unleashed his own supreme weapon. The one who had the knowledge used a mantra to invoke the *vayavya* weapon. In an instant, it destroyed the energy and might of Indra's clouds, rain and thunder. The clouds dried, the lightning died and the dark sky was pacified. Cool and pleasant winds began to blow and the sun's orbit returned to normal. Delighted that there was no opposition any more and with the many offerings being made, the fire blazed up again and filled the world with its roar.

'On seeing that the fire was protected by the two Krishnas, many feathered beings of the Suparna[33] lineage, including Garuda, rose up into the sky, eager to attack the warriors Krishna and Pandava with their wings, beaks and claws, as tough as the vajra. Many serpents also descended near Pandava, spewing terrible and flaming venom from

their mouths. As soon as he saw these sky-dwelling creatures, Partha angrily cut them down with his arrows. Benumbed, their bodies fell into the flaming fire. At that, the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the serpents rose up, uttering loud roars and desiring to fight. They were armed with iron clubs, chakras and *bhushundis*,[34] with lightning in them. They were intent on killing Krishna and Partha, their great energy benumbed by their anger. Though they unleashed a fearful shower of weapons, Bibhatsu churned their upper limbs with his sharp arrows. The immensely energetic Krishna, destroyer of enemies, then wrought a great slaughter of daityas and danavas with his chakra. Pierced by arrows and struck with the force of the chakra, many powerful ones were pacified, like waves that reach a shore.

'Then Shakra, the great lord of the thirty gods,[35] was angered. Riding a white elephant, he charged at them. Grasping lightning, he hurled his vajra weapon with great force and the slayer of demons announced to the gods that the two had been killed. On seeing that the king of the gods was about to hurl the great lightning, the gods grasped all their respective weapons—King Yama his *kaladanda,*[36] the god of wealth his *shibika,*[37] Varuna his *pasha,*[38] Shiva his *vichakra,*[39] the two Ashvins luminiscent *oshadhi,*[40] Dhata his *dhanu*,[41] Jaya his *musala*,[42] the immensely strong Tvashta a mountain, Amsha his *shakti*[43] and the god of death[44] his *parashva*.[45] Aryaman grasped a fearful *parigha*[46] and walked around. Mitra stood there, grasping a chakra that was as sharp as a razor. O lord of the earth! Pusha, Bhaga and Savita grabbed bows and swords and rushed at Krishna and Partha. O supreme among men! The Rudras, the powerful Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas resplendent in their energy, and many other gods armed with diverse weapons advanced towards Krishna and Partha, in a desire to kill them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that great battle, wonderful omens were witnessed, equal to those seen when all beings were exterminated at the end of a yuga.'

'The two Achyutas[47] saw the angry Shakra and the assemblage of the other gods. Those fearless and invincible warriors stood there, their bows ready. When they saw the gods advancing from every direction, they angrily repulsed them with arrows that were like the vajra. Repeatedly, the resolutions of the gods were shattered. In fear, they gave up the battle and sought refuge with Shakra. On seeing the gods repulsed by Madhava and Arjuna, the sages who dwell in heaven were astonished. Shakra was also extremely pleased at witnessing their constant prowess in battle and engaged in fighting them once again. In an attempt to question Savyasachi's valour, the chastiser of Paka[48] then cast down a gigantic shower of rocks. But intolerantly, Arjuna countered that shower. On seeing that his act was unsuccessful, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, increased the strength of his shower. But the son of the chastiser of Paka brought great pleasure to his father by destroying that shower of rocks with his swift arrows. Wishing to kill Pandu's

son, Shakra then uprooted with his bare hands a giant peak of Mandara, with all its trees, and flung it. But Arjuna immediately splintered that peak of the mountain into a thousand pieces with his swift and straight, fire-tipped arrows. The sight of that mountain splintering was like that of the sky breaking, with the sun, the moon and the planets. Pieces of that giant mountain fell on the forest and killed many beings who lived in Khandava.'

219

Vaishampayana said, 'The inhabitants of Khandava were frightened at the fall of the mountain—danavas, rakshasas, serpents, hyenas, bears, elephants in rut, tigers, lions with manes, deer, buffaloes, hundreds of birds and other forest-dwellers. In great alarm, they and many other beings slithered away. They saw the raging fire and the two Krishnas, their weapons ready and the terrible roar scared them. Janardana let fly his chakra, radiant with its own energy, and small creatures, danavas and *nishacharas*[49] were instantly cut down in hundreds and hurled into the fire. Mangled by Krishna's chakra and covered with fat and blood, the rakshasas then seemed to be like twilight clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varshneya was like destiny, killing pishachas, birds, serpents and animals in their thousands. Released from the hand of Krishna, the slayer of enemies, the chakra repeatedly killed many beings and returned to his hand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As he went about killing all the beings, the form of he, who is the soul of all beings, became dreadful.

'All the assembled gods and danavas could not vanquish Krishna and Pandava in battle. Nor could the gods save the forest with their strength or quench the fire, so they retreated. On seeing how the masses of gods had been turned away, Shatakratu was extremely pleased and praised Krishna and Pandava. When the gods were repulsed, a disembodied voice spoke to Shatakratu in a loud and deep tone. "Your friend Takshaka, supreme among serpents, is not here. At the time of Khandava's burning, he had gone to Kurukshetra. O Shakra! Listen to my words. You cannot defeat Vasudeva and Arjuna when they are steadfast in battle. They are the gods Nara and Narayana, famous in heaven. You yourself know their bravery and their valour. These two supreme and ancient sages are invincible in battle and cannot be conquered in any of the worlds. They deserve the worship of all the gods, asuras, yakshas, rakshas, gandharvas, humans, *kinnaras*[50] and serpents. O, Vasava![51] Therefore, depart from here with the gods. The destruction of Khandava is destined." Having heard these words and knowing them to be true, the lord of the immortals gave up his anger and jealousy and returned to heaven. O king! On seeing the great-souled Shatakratu leave, all the other dwellers of heaven also departed. When the two warriors, Vasudeva and Arjuna, saw the king of the gods leave with the other gods, they roared like lions.

'O king! Krishna and Pandava were delighted that the king of the gods had left.

Fearlessly, they continued with burning the forest. Having vanquished the gods the way the wind scatters the clouds, Arjuna used showers of arrows to kill the beings who lived in Khandava. Not a single being could escape from there, they were cut down by Savyasachi's arrows. Even the greatest of beings could not look upon the invincible Arjuna in battle, not to speak of engaging him in a fight. Like the god of death himself, he pierced one with a hundred arrows and a hundred with one, and dead, they descended into the flames. They found no refuge along the banks, or in the uneven plains, or in the abodes of the ancestors and the gods. The heat increased and thousands of herds of beings cried out loudly in pain. Elephants, deer and birds cried out and the sound scared those who lived in the Ganga and the ocean. No one dared gaze at the mighty-armed Arjuna and the immensely strong Krishna, let alone fighting with them. With his chakra, Hari slew rakshasas, danavas and nagas and those who ventured along solitary paths. The heads and trunks sliced with the force of the chakra, the giant bodies fell into the mouth of the blazing fire. Aided by the flesh, torrents of blood and fat, the flames rose up into the sky, without a trace of smoke. Agni's eyes blazed, his tongue blazed and his wide-open mouth also blazed. The hair stood up, drinking up the fat of life, the eyes were tawny. The fire fed on the nectar that Krishna and Arjuna had provided and was extremely happy, satiated and contented.

'Then Madhusudana saw an asura named Maya suddenly attempting to escape from Takshaka's abode. The fire's charioteer was the wind and assuming the form of a hermit with matted hair and roaring like clouds, he pursued him with the intention of consuming him. Vasudeva stood with his chakra raised, ready to kill. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the raised chakra and the fire ready to consume him, Maya cried out, "O Arjuna! Save me." Hearing these scared words, Arjuna replied, "Do not be frightened." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Partha's words seemed to instil new life into Maya. Maya was Namuchi's[52] brother. When Partha told Maya he need not fear, Dasharha no longer desired to kill him and the fire did not burn him either. In that flaming forest, Agni did not burn six beings—Ashvasena, Maya and the four Sharngakas.'[53]

220

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Why did Agni, the fire, not burn the Sharngakas when that forest was blazing? Tell me at once. O, brahmana! You have recounted the reason why Ashvasena and the danava Maya were not burnt. But you have not told us the reason for the Sharngakas. O, brahmana! It is extraordinary that the Sharngakas escaped from destruction. Recount to us why they were not destroyed in the conflagaration.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you everything exactly about why Agni did not consume the Sharngakas. O king! There was a great

rishi renowned by the name of Mandapala. He was learned in dharma, rigid in his vows and chief among ascetics. He followed the path of the rishis who held up their seed,[54] was devoted to studying the sacred texts and dharma, was an ascetic and had achieved control over his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having attained the final goal of ascetism, he gave up his human body and went to the world of the ancestors. But he did not find the fruits of his acts there. The dwellers of heaven were seated around Dharmaraja[55] and he asked them, "Why have I not attained the worlds that should have been the fruit of my asceticism? What have I not done that this should be the fruit of my actions? O dwellers of heaven! I will do that which will get me the fruits of my asceticism and open that which is now closed. Tell me." The gods replied, "O brahmana! Hear about the debts men are undoubtedly born with—to rituals, brahmacharya[56] and offspring, and these are respectively discharged through sacrifices, austerities and progeny. You are an ascetic and you have performed sacrifices. But you did not have any offspring. Because you did not have offspring, these worlds are closed to you. Therefore, have progeny and you will enjoy these worlds for an eternity. O sage! A son saves a father from the hell known as *put.*[57] O supreme among brahmanas! Therefore, try to obtain offspring." On hearing these words of the dwellers of heaven, Mandapala began to wonder how he might obtain a large number of offspring swiftly. After thinking about this, he concluded that birds give birth to many offspring.

'So he became a Sharngaka bird and united with a female Sharngaka bird named Jarita. Through her, he had four sons who were knowledgable about the brahman. While these young sons were still inside their eggs, the sage deserted them there in that forest with their mother and went off after Lapita.[58] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the immensely illustrious one went off after Lapita, out of affection for her children, Jarita became very thoughtful and anxious. O king! Those sons, the infant rishis still in their eggs, had undeservedly been abandoned by their father in Khandava forest. But out of love for her sons, Jarita could not discard them and after they were born, brought them up in her own way.[59]

'After some time, the rishi Mandapala was wandering in the forest with Lapita and he saw Agni advance towards Khandava to consume it. Knowing his resolution and knowing his sons were still young, the brahmana sage prayed to the greatly energetic fire, lord of the world, scared about the protection of his sons. Mandapala said, "O Agni! You are the mouth of all the gods, you are the one who carries sacrificial offerings. You are the purifier who dwells invisibly in all living beings. The learned have said that you are one and have again said that you are three.[60] They think of you in eight forms[61] and imagine you as the one who carries sacrificial offerings. The supreme rishis say that you have created the entire universe. O fire! The universe is based on you and without you, it will be destroyed instantly. It is after paying homage to you that the brahmanas

go to the eternal worlds they have earned through their actions, together with their wives and sons. O Agni! It is said that you are the fire in the clouds in the sky, in their lightning. The flames that emerge from you burn down all beings. O immensely radiant one! O Jataveda![62] You have created everything in this universe. Everything, mobile and immobile, every action and everything that exists is based on you. You have determined the ancient waters, everything in the universe is based on you. The offerings to the gods and the offerings to the ancestors, as prescribed, are based on you. O Agni! You are the one who burns down, you are Dhata,[63] you are Brihaspati.[64] You are the two Ashvins, the two Yamas,[65] Mitra, Soma and Anila."[66] O king! Having been thus prayed to by Mandapala, Agni was satisfied with the immeasurably energetic sage. With happiness in his heart, he asked him, "What good can I do for you?" With hands joined in salutation, Mandapala told the fire, "When you burn Khandava forest, please spare my sons." The illustrious bearer of sacrificial offerings gave him his word and at that time, he blazed into Khandava, wishing to consume it.'

221

Vaishampayana said, 'When the fire blazed up, the Sharngakas were extremely distressed, miserable and extremely anxious, because they could not find any means of escaping. O lord of men! Listening to her young sons, their ascetic mother Jarita was stricken with grief and began to lament.

'Jarita said, "This terrible fire is burning the inside of the forest and advancing towards us. It has blazed up the entire universe and is increasing my misery. My children still have imperfect understanding; they are without feathers and feet. Yet they are the ultimate refuge of our ancestors and are tugging at me. The blazing fire is advancing, licking the tall trees with its tongue and creating terror. My sons still do not have strength and are unable to escape. Nor can I escape somewhere else, taking my sons with me. I cannot abandon them and my heart is distressed. Which one of my sons will I leave and which will I take with me? What should I do? O my sons! What do you think? Even after thinking a lot, I can find no means of escape for you. I will now cover you with my body and die with you. In earlier times, your cruel father abandoned you, uttering these words, 'My lineage will be established on Jaritari, because he is the eldest. Sarisrikva will have offspring, extending the lineage of my ancestors. Stambamitra will practise austerities and Drona will be supreme in knowledge of the brahman.' Who will I take with me and leave and who will suffer the greatest of calamities?" She was bereft of judgement because she did not know what was the right course of action. Through her own thoughts she did not see any means whereby her sons might escape from the fire.

'When she had spoken in this way, the four Sharngakas spoke to their mother. "O mother! Give up your love for us and go to a place where there is no fire. If we are destroyed, you will have other sons. O mother! But if you are destroyed, there will be no

progeny in our lineage. O mother! After taking into consideration these two outcomes, the time has come for you to do that which is best for our lineage. Out of love for your sons, do not do anything that will destroy our lineage. The act of our father, who wishes to attain the worlds, must not amount to nothing." Jarita replied, "Near this tree, there is a rat hole in the ground. Swiftly enter the hole and you will suffer no fear from the fire there. O sons! When you have entered it, I will cover the hole with dirt. That is the only means that I can think of to counter the blazing fire. When the fire has died out, I will return and remove the mass of dirt. If you wish to escape from the fire, listen to these words of mine." The Sharngakas said, "We are only masses of flesh, without feathers, and the carnivorous rat will destroy us. On beholding this fear, we cannot enter. We do not know how we can escape being burnt by the fire or being eaten by the rat. How can our father attain fulfilment and how can our mother survive? The dwellers of the sky will either be destroyed in the hole by the rat or by the fire. Considering both the possibilities, it is better to be burnt than to be eaten. To die from being eaten by a rat in a hole is a most miserable death. But destruction of the body by fire has been sanctioned by the learned."'

222

'Jarita said, "The rat emerged from this hole. The little creature was seized by a hawk in its claws and carried away. Therefore, you have nothing to be scared of."

'The Sharngakas replied, "We do not know for certain that the rat was carried away by a hawk. There may be others there and we have every reason to fear them. It is not certain that the fire will reach this place. The wind can be seen to be turning. O mother! But there is no doubt that the creatures in the hole will kill us. O mother! An uncertain death is superior to one that is certain. Take to the sky as you should. You will have other handsome sons."

'Jarita said, "I myself saw the powerful hawk approach the hole, roam around, and then fly away from the hole with the rat. I swiftly flew after the hawk, pronouncing blessings on it for having taken the rat away from the hole. 'O king of hawks! Since you are flying away with our hated enemy, may you reside in heaven, golden, and without any enemies.' When the hungry bird had finished eating, with its permission, I returned home. O sons! Enter the hole confidently, there is nothing you should fear. It is certain that I have seen the hawk carry away the rat."

'The Sharngakas replied, "O mother! We do not know whether the rat has really been carried away by the hawk. Without knowing, we cannot enter the hole."

'Jarita said, "I know that the rat has been carried away by the hawk. Therefore, there is no fear and do as I say."

'The Sharngakas replied, "It is not that you are trying to free us from our great fear through a falsehood. When a person's knowledge is muddled, his acts do not result from

intelligence. You have received no favours from us. You do not even know who we are. Who are we to you that you are trying to save us through so much suffering to yourself? You are young and beautiful and are capable of finding a husband. Follow your husband and you will obtain handsome sons. We will enter the fire and attain the beautiful worlds. If the fire does not consume us, you will come back to us again."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the Sharnga left her sons in Khandava and swiftly went to the regions where there was no fire and no fear. The blazing fire with its piercing flames arrived at the place where the Sharngakas, Mandapala's sons, were. The Sharngakas saw the flames blazing in their energy. Jaritari addressed these words, so that the fire could hear.'

223

'Jaritari said, "The intelligent man stays awake before difficult times. When the difficult time arrives, there is no suffering at all. But he who is not intelligent and is not sensible knows nothing and suffers because of difficulties when a difficult time arrives."

'Sarisrikva said, "You are implacable and intelligent. The time has come when our lives are endangered. There is no doubt that only one among many is wise and brave."

'Stambamitra said, "The eldest is the protector, because the eldest saves in times of difficulty. If the eldest one does not know, what can the younger ones do?"

'Drona said, "The one with the golden seed[67] is swiftly advancing towards our abode in flames. The seven tongues of the fire are lean and are eagerly licking."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words of his brother, Jaritari folded his hands on his forehead in salutation. O king! Listen to the way he praised the fire.

'Jaritari said, "You are the soul of the wind, the purifier.[68] You are the body of the creepers. O virile one![69] You are the source of the water. The water is also your source. O most powerful one! Your flames are like the rays of the sun and they go above and below, and on every side."

'Sarisrikva said, "O you with the clouds in your banner! Our mother has ignored us and we do not know our father. Our wings have still not grown. O Agni! We have no protector but for you. You are the only hero and, therefore, protect us. O Agni! We are seeking refuge with you. In your benevolent form and in your seven flames, therefore, protect us. O Jataveda! You alone are the one that heats. O god! You alone are the one who heats the heavens. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Protect us young rishis today and bypass this place."

'Stambamitra said, "O Agni! You alone are everything. The entire universe is established in you. You sustain all beings and you hold up everything that exists. O Agni! You are the bearer of all sacrificial offerings. You alone are the supreme sacrificial offering. The learned ones offer sacrifices to you, knowing you to be one and many. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! You are the creator of the three worlds. When the time

arrives,[70] you kindle them and cook afresh. You are the mother of the entire universe. O Agni! You are the one in whom everything is established again. O lord of the universe! You remain inside and digest the food that beings eat.[71] Everything is established in you and you are always cooking and always expanding."

'Drona said, "O Jataveda! You are the sun with its rays. You suck up the water from the earth and the juices that are born in the ground. O Shukra! You take them all and return them again in the form of rain when it is time and cause everything to grow. O Shukra! It is from you that the verdant creepers grow again. The ponds, the seas and the giant oceans are born. O you whose rays are piercing! We are always dependent on Varuna.[72] Be benevolent and be our protector. Do not destroy us today. O fire! Your eyes have the colour of copper. Your neck is red and your trail is black. Save us, like the houses on the shores of the ocean."'[73]

Vaishampayana said, 'When he had been thus addressed by Drona of the unsullied deeds, Jataveda spoke to Drona, remembering the promise he had made to Mandapala. Agni said, "O Drona! You are a rishi. What you have uttered is the Brahman.[74] I will do what you desire and you have nothing to fear. Mandapala had mentioned all this to me earlier and had asked me to spare his sons when I consumed the forest. The word that I gave him and the words that you have just spoken are both of great importance. Therefore, tell me what I should do. O fortunate one! O brahmana! O illustrious one! I am extremely pleased with your praise." Drona replied, "O Shukra! These cats cause us trouble all the time. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Place them and all their relatives between your teeth." O Janamejaya! After granting leave to the Sharngakas, Agni acted accordingly. Blazing up, he consumed the Khandava forest.'

224

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Mandapala had meanwhile begun to worry about his sons. Although he had spoken about them to the one with the piercing rays, his mind was still anxious. In his anxiety for his sons, he told Lapita, "O Lapita! My sons are still incapable of escaping. When the fire grows in strength and the wind blows swiftly, my sons will be incapable of freeing themselves. Their ascetic mother will be incapable of saving them. She will suffer misery when she sees that she cannot save her sons. My sons are incapable of running or flying. She will run around, lamenting her misery. How is my son Jaritari? How is Sarisrikva? How are Stambamitra and Drona and how is that ascetic?" Thus, rishi Mandapala lamented in that forest.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In her jealousy, Lapita replied in these words, "You need not suffer anxiety on account of your sons. You have yourself told me that they are powerful and energetic rishis. They have nothing to fear from the flames. In my presence, you spoke to Agni on their behalf. The great-souled and blazing one gave you

his promise. Being the protector of the world, he will never utter a falsehood. They are eloquent in speech and your anxiety is not because of them. You are anxious because you are thinking of my enemy.[75] It is certain that you do not love me as much as you loved her earlier. It can never be right that one with two parties should display no love towards his relative, even when the one close to him suffers. Go to Jarita, for whom you are suffering. I will wander around alone here, like one who is allied with a wretch."[76] Mandapala replied, "I am not wandering around in this world because of the reasons you believe. I am roaming around for the sake of offspring and those I have are now facing suffering. He who casts off that which he has, for the sake of that which might be there, is stupid and the world disregards him. Do what you desire. These blazing flames of Agni are licking the giant trees and are giving birth to a hateful and malevolent sorrow in my heart." After the flames had passed by that spot, Jarita, who was attached to her sons, swiftly returned to the place where her sons were. Weeping and miserable in the forest, she saw that all her sons were well, having escaped from the fire. On seeing them, she wept again and again. She embraced her sons one by one and they too wept.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, Mandapala suddenly arrived there. But none of his sons displayed any signs of greeting. He spoke to each one of them again and again and also to Jarita. But none of them uttered a single word to the rishi, good or bad. Mandapala asked, "Which one of you is my eldest son and who is the one born after that? Who is the one in the middle and who is the youngest? I am speaking to you in misery. Why aren't you replying to me? I left you to the fire, but I did not find any peace." Jarita replied, "What do you have to do with the eldest one or with the one who came after him? What do you have to do with the one in the middle or with the youngest who is an ascetic? You had left me miserable in every way and gone away. Go back to the young Lapita, the one with the beautiful smile." Mandapala said, "Other than a different man, there is nothing in this world that is more fatal to women than a co-wife. Even the fortunate Arundhati, renowned in all the worlds and devoted to her vows, was distrustful of the supreme rishi Vasishtha. He was pure of heart and always devoted to her welfare. But she was ill disposed towards that *saptarshi*[77] and because of that insult, she is now a tiny star that is like fire covered with smoke. She is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible and is seen as an evil omen. You yourself had a connection with me to obtain offspring. Now it has come to this that you give up what you once desired and have become like her. A man should never commit the act of trusting a woman, even if she happens to be a wife. Once a woman has obtained sons, she no longer pays attention to her duties." At this, all his sons came and paid homage to him. O king! And he too provided reassurances to his sons.'

‘Mandapala said, “I kept the fire informed about your protection and Agni had earlier given me his word. On account of Agni’s promise, the devotion to dharma that is there in your mother and the great energy that is there in you, I had not come here earlier. O sons! You had no reason to worry about your death. All of you are rishis, learned in the knowledge of the brahman. The fire knows that well enough.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having thus reassured his sons, Mandapala took his wife with him and leaving that region, went to another region. The illustrious lord with the piercing rays consumed the kindling Khandava forest, with the assistance of the two Krishnas and brought terror to beings and the world. The fire drank up rivers of fat and marrow. Agni was extremely satisfied and appeared before Arjuna.

‘Then, surrounded by masses of Maruts, the illustrious lord of the gods descended from the sky and spoke these words to Partha and Madhava, “You have accomplished a feat that is difficult, even for the immortals. I am pleased. Choose boons that are difficult to obtain and beyond what humans can get.” Partha asked for the boon that he might get all of Shakra’s weapons. Then Shakra fixed the time for the receiving. “O Pandava! When the illustrious Mahadeva will be pleased with you, that is when I will give you all the weapons. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O Dhananjaya! I will myself know when that time has arrived. Because of your great asceticism, I will then bestow on you all my *agneya*[78] and all my vayavya weapons and all my other weapons and you will accept them.” Vasudeva asked for the boon that he might always be loving towards Partha. The lord of the gods happily granted this boon. Having done so, the god who was the lord of the Maruts, took his leave of the fire and returned to heaven with the thirty gods.

‘Having consumed the forest with its animals and birds for five days and one, the fire was extremely satiated and ceased. He had eaten flesh and drunk fat and blood. O lord of the world! He was filled with extreme joy and spoke to them. “O warriors! O tigers among men! You have gratified me to the point of extreme bliss. You now have my leave to go where you want.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus granted leave by the great-souled fire, the threesome of Arjuna, Vasudeva and the danava Maya wandered around for some time. They then seated themselves on the banks of the beautiful river.’

This ends the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata.

Sabha Parva

The word sabha means assembly hall or council and in the eighteen-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sabha Parva comes second. Understandably, this parva is about an assembly hall. Sabha Parva has seventy-two chapters. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 20 through 28 constitute Sabha Parva. There are two ways to number chapters in this translation. The first way is to do it consecutively within each of the eighteen parvas. That is, the numbering of the chapters begins afresh with Sabha Parva. This is the way the chapters are numbered in the Sanskrit text. The alternative is to number chapters consecutively right from the beginning. The former makes it easier to match the translation with the Sanskrit text, but the latter is probably more reader-friendly. The numbering of the chapters, from Sabha Parva onwards, uses both, so that the reader has choice. The first number is a consecutive one, from the beginning, and the second number (within brackets) is the numbering within Sabha Parva.

Section Twenty

Sabha Parva

This parva has 429 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 226(1): 19 shlokas
Chapter 227(2): 23 shlokas
Chapter 228(3): 34 shlokas
Chapter 229(4): 34 shlokas
Chapter 230(5): 116 shlokas
Chapter 231(6): 18 shlokas
Chapter 232(7): 26 shlokas
Chapter 233(8): 38 shlokas
Chapter 234(9): 25 shlokas
Chapter 235(10): 23 shlokas
Chapter 236(11): 73 shlokas

The name of the first section within this parva is also the same as the name of the parva. The word sabha having already been explained.

226 (1)

Vaishampayana said, 'In Vasudeva's presence, Maya joined his hands as a sign of respect and repeatedly worshipping him, spoke to Partha in flattering words, "O Kounteya! You have saved me from the angry Krishna and the fire that desired to consume me. Please tell me what I can do for you." Arjuna replied, "O great asura! You have done everything and can leave in peace. May you always be friendly towards us and may we always be friendly towards you." Maya said, "O illustrious one! O bull among men! What you have said is deserving of you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But as a token of my affection, I wish to do something for you. I am extremely wise, the Vishvakarma of the danavas. O Pandava! Therefore, I wish to do something for you." Arjuna replied, "You think that I have saved your life from instant death. But if that is the case, I cannot ask you to do anything. O Danava! But I do not wish to stand in the way of your resolution either. Therefore, do something for Krishna and that will be tantamount to doing something for me." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus urged by Maya, Vasudeva thought for an instant about what might be done for him. Having thought, Krishna said, "O Daitya! Build a wonderful assembly hall for Dharmaraja that you think to be worthy of him, so that no one from the world of men can construct an assembly hall that is its equal, even as they gaze at it amazed. O Maya! Build an assembly hall in which we will see the designs[1] of the gods, asuras and humans." Having heard these words, Maya was delighted. He drew up a design for an assembly hall for the Pandavas that was like a vimana.

‘Then Krishna and Partha told Dharmaraja Yudhishthira everything that had happened and introduced Maya to him. Yudhishthira offered him the homage that he deserved. Maya accepted and paid his respects in return. O lord of the universe! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the daitya told Pandu’s sons about the deeds of the gods in ancient times, in diverse places. After resting for a while, Vishvakarma[2] reflected and began to build an assembly hall for the great-souled Pandavas. According to the wishes of the great-souled Krishna and Pritha’s sons, the immensely energetic one performed the initial rites on an auspicious occasion. The valorous one honoured thousands of the best brahmanas, fed them *payasa*[3] and donated a lot of riches to them. He then measured out a divine and beautiful plot that was ten thousand *kishku*[4] in every direction and was marked by all the good characteristics.’

227(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Janardana lived happily in Khandavaprastha, beloved by the sons of Pritha and honoured by them. Wishing to see his father, he then made up his mind to leave. The one with the large eyes paid his homage to Dharmaraja and Pritha.[5] The one who is worshipped by the world worshipped his father’s sister by touching her feet with his head. She inhaled the fragrance of Keshava’s head and embraced him. Then the immensely famous Hrishikesha[6] Krishna went to see his sister and spoke to the soft-spoken and gentle Subhadra with tears in his voice. The illustrious one’s words were brief, appropriate and loaded with goodness. She too worshipped him with her head bowed down and gave him messages for her relatives. Taking his leave from the beautiful one, Varshneya then went to see Krishna[7] and Dhoumya. The supreme among men worshipped Dhoumya in the appropriate way and consoling Droupadi, Janardana took her leave. The learned and strong one then went to the other brothers with Partha. Surrounded by the five brothers, Krishna looked like Shakra surrounded by the immortals. The bull among the Yadus then worshipped the gods and the brahmanas with garlands, chanting, obeisance and many kinds of fragrances.

‘Having performed all these acts, the best of those who are supreme gave the brahmanas vessels full of curds, fruit, *akshata*[8] and riches and circumambulated them. They uttered their blessings and he set out, ascending his swift and golden chariot that had Tarkshya[9] on its banner. Carrying his club, chakra, Sharnga[10] and other weapons the lotus-eyed one left at an auspicious and excellent *muhurta*,[11] tithi[12] and nakshatra, pulled by his horses Sainya and Sugriva.[13] King Yudhishthira, lord of the Kurus, ascended after him and out of love for him, made the charioteer Daruka, supreme among charioteers, stand aside and himself grasped the reins. Arjuna also mounted and waved a golden-handled and white *chamara*[14] all around his head. The powerful

Bhimasena and the twins followed Krishna, surrounded by the priests and the citizens. Keshava, the destroyer of enemy warriors was thus followed by the brothers and shone like a preceptor followed by his beloved disciples. Bidding the lamenting Partha farewell, Govinda embraced him. He then paid his homage to Yudhishthira, Bhimasena and the twins. The twins embraced him firmly in their arms and paid him homage. After making an agreement[15] with the Pandavas and persuading them and their followers to turn back, Madhusudana Krishna then left for his own city, in glory like Purandara. Out of affection, their eyes lovingly followed Krishna for as long as they could see, because their minds were still unsatisfied at the sight of Keshava. The handsome Shouri[16] swiftly disappeared from their sight. Their desires unsatisfied, since their hearts had left with Govinda, Pritha's sons turned back and those bulls among men returned to their city. Riding his chariot, Krishna reached Dvaraka in time.'

228(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'Maya then spoke to Partha Arjuna, supreme among victorious ones. "With your permission, I will now go away. But I will be back soon. To the north of Kailasha and near Mount Mainaka, where all the danavas perform sacrifices near the beautiful lake Bindu, I have collected jewels and treasure.[17] Vrishaparva[18] is always faithful to his promises and I have kept it in his sabha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If it is still there, I will go and bring it. I will then build a sabha for the Pandavas that will be famous, beautiful, pleasing to the heart and adorned with all the gems. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There is a supreme club in lake Bindu, kept there by King Youvanashva[19] after he slew his enemies in battle. It is heavy and firm and is embellished with golden knobs, equal to one hundred thousand clubs and is capable of killing everything. That will be for Bhima what the Gandiva is for you. There is also Varuna's great conch shell, with an excellent sound, and named Devadatta. There is no doubt that I shall give you all these." Having told Partha this, the asura left towards the north-east.

'To the north of Kailasa, near Mount Mainaka, there is an illustrious peak named Hiranyashringa, filled with great gems. There is the beautiful lake Bindu, where King Bhagiratha lived for a long time, in his desire to see the Ganga, since known as Bhagirathi.[20] O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The great-souled one, lord of all beings, performed one hundred great sacrifices. There were many golden sacrificial stakes at the spot, encrusted with gems. This was for the sake of beauty and not to set an example.[21] It was there that the thousand-eyed one, Shachi's husband, attained success. It was there that the eternal lord of all beings, whose energy is piercing, was worshipped by thousands of beings after creating all the worlds. It is there that Nara, Narayana, Brahma, Yama and Sthanu, as the fifth, perform sacrifices after

the end of one thousand yugas. It is there that Vasudeva always faithfully performed sacrifices for one thousand years, for the sake of those who are good. It was there that Keshava placed thousands and tens of thousands of splendid sacrificial stakes and altars, garlanded in gold.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arriving there, he took the club and the conch shell and the crystal objects that were with Vrishaparva and were required for the sabha. He brought all this with the assistance of the servant rakshasas. Bringing all this back, the asura built a matchless sabha. It was beautiful, divine, encrusted with jewels and famous in the three worlds. He gave the supreme club to Bhimasena and the supreme conch shell Devadatta to Partha. O great king! The supreme assembly hall had golden pillars and a circumference of ten thousand kishku. Its beautiful form was radiant and divine, like the fire, the sun or the moon. Its splendour seemed to challenge the blazing splendour of the sun. Its radiance was divine, as if it was on fire with divine energy. It was like the sky covered with a mountain or a cloud—spacious, large, smooth, without blemish; a remover of fatigue. It had the best objects in it and its walls were garlanded with gems. It had many jewels, many treasures and had been built well by Vishvakarma.[22] The unrivalled beauty Maya gave it was such that Sudharma of the Dasharhas or Brahma's palace was no match. On Maya's instruction, eight thousand rakshasas, known as *kimkaras*,[23] guarded and protected the sabha. They could travel in the sky, were terrible and had large forms and great strength. Their eyes were red and yellow, their ears were like conch shells and they were armed.

'Inside the sabha, Maya built a matchless tank full of lotuses. Their leaves were made of *vaidurya*,[24] and their stalks were made out of brilliant gems. There was the fragrance of lotuses and there were many fish[25] in the water. There were flowering lotuses and it was adorned with fish and turtles. Gentle steps led down into clear and pure water that was always present and was stirred by the wind. It was decorated as with dots of pearls.[26] On seeing the tank decorated with gems and precious stones, some kings did not recognize and fell into it, out of ignorance.[27] Around the sabha, there were giant trees that were always flowering. They were beautiful and dark, and cast cool shade. All the gardens were fragrant. All the ponds were adorned with swans, *karandavas*[28] and *chakravakas*.[29] The wind carried the fragrance of the flowers in the water and those on land everywhere and pleased the Pandavas. Such was the sabha that Maya built in fourteen months. When it was completed, he informed King Dharmaraja.'

229(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'King Yudhishthira then entered. The lord of men fed ten thousand brahmanas with ghee, payasa, roots and fruits and gave them unused garments and

many garlands. The lord gave each of them one thousand cows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The cries of "what an auspicious day" seemed to touch heaven. The supreme among the Kurus worshipped the gods with music, diverse songs and many fragrances. Then, for seven nights, the great-souled Yudhishthira was served by wrestlers, dancers, fighters, raconteurs and minstrels. When the homage had thus been paid, the Pandava and his brothers pleasured in that beautiful sabha, like Shakra does in heaven.

'Rishis and kings from many countries were seated with the Pandavas in that sabha—Asita, Devala, Satya, Sarpamali, Mahashira, Arvavasu, Sumitra, Maitreya, Shunaka, Bali, Baka, Dalbhya, Sthulashira, Krishna Dvaipayana and we ourselves, Vyasa's disciples—Shuka, Sumantu, Jaimini and Paila. Then there were Tittira, Yajnavalkya, Lomaharshana and his son Apsuhomya, Dhoumya, Animandavya, Koushika, Damoshnisha, Traivani, Parnada, Ghatajanuka, Mounjayana, Vayubhaksha, Parasharya, the two Sarikas, Balavaka, Shinivaka, Sutyapala, Kritasharma, Jatukarna, Shikhavana, Subala, Parijataka, the immensely fortunate Parvata, the sage Markandeya, Pavitrapani, Savarni, Bhaluki, Galava, Janghabandhu, Raibhya, Kopavegashrava, Bhrigu, Haribabhru, Koundinya, Babhrumali, Sanatana, Kakshivana, Oushija, Nachiketa, Goutama, Painga, Varaha, Shunaka, the immensely ascetic Shandilya, Karkara, Venujangha, Kalapa and Katha. These sages were immersed in dharma, were self-controlled and had their senses under restraint. There were many others who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. All these supreme rishis waited upon the great-souled one in the sabha. They were learned in dharma and immaculate and discoursed about pure tales. In that same way, the best of kshatriyas also waited on Dharmaraja—the fortunate, great-souled, righteous and prosperous Munjaketu, Samgramajit, Durmukha, the valorous Ugrasena, the lord of the earth Kakshasena, the undefeated Kshemaka, Kamala the king of Kamboja, the mighty Kampana who alone made the Yavanas[30] tremble the way the Kalakeya asuras were made to tremble by the wielder of the vajra,[31] King Jatasura beloved by the Madras, kings Kunti and Kuninda of the Kiratas, Anga, Vanga and Pundra, Pandya, Udraja, Andhraka, King Sumana of the Kiratas, the king of the Yavanas, Chanura, Devavrata, Bhoja, Bhimaratha, Shrutayudha of Kalinga, Jayatsena of Magadha, Susharma, Chekitana, Suratha the destroyer of enemies, Ketumana, Vasudana, Kritakshana of Videha, Sudharma, Aniruddha, the immensely strong Shrutayudha, the invincible Anuparaja, the great alms-giver Kshemajit, Shishupala and his son, the king of Karusha, the invincible Vrishni princes who were like the gods, namely, Ahuka, Viprithu, Gada, Sarana, Akrura, Kritavarma, Shini's son Satyaki, Bhishmaka, Ahriti, the valorous Dyumatsena, the great archers from Kekaya, Yajnasena of the Somakas. O king! There were all the immensely powerful princes of the Vrishnis who had learnt the science of archery from Arjuna and were dressed in deer and antelope hides[32] and other princes who had been similarly taught—

Rukmini son,[33] and Samba and Yuyudhana Satyaki.[34] O ruler of the earth! These and many other kings were there. Dhananjaya's eternal friend Tumbaru was there, Chitrasena with his advisers and many other gandharvas and apsaras, skilled in singing and music, knowledgeable in the beating of *tala*[35] and kinnaras, who were excellent pupils of *laya*.[36] At Tumbaru's command, those learned ones sang in celestial tones, as was laid down in the rules, and pleasured and paid homage to Pandu's sons and the rishis who were assembled in the sabha, rigid in their vows and devoted to the truth. They paid homage to Yudhishthira the way the gods do so to Brahma in heaven.'

230 (5)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the great-souled Pandavas were seated there and the great-souled gandharvas were also seated in the sabha, the immensely energetic rishi Narada was on a tour of the worlds and came there, accompanied by other rishis. O lord of kings! The devarshi's radiance was infinite and he could travel as he willed. He wished to please himself by seeing the Pandavas' sabha and arrived with Parijata, the wise Parvata, Sumukha and Soumya. On seeing rishi Narada, the chief of the Pandavas,[37] who knew everything about dharma, instantly arose, with his younger brothers. With humility, he worshipped him happily and offered him a seat in accordance with the prescribed rites. The righteous one offered him homage with jewels and everything that he desired. Having been thus worshipped by all the Pandavas, the great rishi who was learned in the Vedas asked Yudhishthira questions mixed with dharma, artha and kama.

'Narada asked, "Is your wealth spent properly? Does your mind find pleasure in dharma? Do you find happiness without making your mind suffer? O god of men! Do you follow the undecaying actions followed by your grandfathers before you, to bring dharma and artha to men? Do you hurt dharma by artha or artha by dharma or both for the sake of pleasures that kama brings? O supreme among victorious ones! O benefactor who knows the value of time! Do you always divide your time equally to the service of artha, dharma and kama? O unblemished one! Do you use the six royal qualities[38] to judge the seven means?[39] Do you test your strengths and weaknesses in the fourteen ways?[40] O supreme among victorious ones! After examining yourself and your enemies, do you follow the eight duties[41] before concluding an alliance? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Are your six chief officers[42] always devoted to you and not corrupted and lazy because of the riches they have earned? Are your deliberations based on reason and service of messengers and not divulged by you, your advisers or ministers? Do you pursue peace and war at the appropriate times? Do you follow the right course for those who are neutral and in the middle? O brave one! Are your ministers like you—wise,

pure, capable of living, of good lineage and loyal to you? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The root of royal victories is in counsel, kept secret by advisers who are skilled in advice and learned in the sacred texts. You have surely not become a slave to sleep and you are awake at the appropriate time. In the dead of the night, do you think about what should be done and what should not? Surely you do not seek advice from only one, or from too many. Surely the counsel obtained from your ministers does not spread throughout the kingdom. When you have decided on action that has great utility but is easily accomplished, do you implement them quickly without placing obstructions in the way? Do you examine the outcome of your action, known and unknown? Once begun, do they have to be restarted or are they confused at the start? O king! O hero! Do people know of action accomplished or partly accomplished, but not those intended and not accomplished? Have you appointed wise teachers, knowledgeable in all the shastras, to instruct all the princes and chief warriors? Do you purchase a single learned man for one thousand foolish ones? In times of distress, it is the learned one who brings the greatest good. Are all your forts stocked with riches, food, weapons, water, instruments, artisans and archers? Even a single adviser who is intelligent, brave, self-controlled and clever can bring great prosperity to a king or a king's son. Do you use groups of three spies, who do not know one another, to find out about the eighteen ministers on the other side and the fifteen on your own territory?[43] O destroyer of enemies! Unknown to them, do you always keep watch over your adversaries, with care and on guard?

'"Is your priest humble, born of a good lineage, famous, untouched by jealousy and do you pay him homage? Is he in charge of the sacrificial fires and is he intelligent and upright, knowledgeable in the rituals? Does he always know the time when sacrifices and offerings must be rendered? Is the appointed astrologer skilled in the knowledge of rituals and in treating all the omens and destinies? Have you appointed superior servants in superior positions and medium ones in medium positions? Have you employed inferior servants in inferior positions? For the best tasks, have you appointed the best advisers, those who are without deceit and pure, up to their fathers and grandfathers? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Surely your subjects are not oppressed by harsh punishments when the ministers govern your kingdom. Do they slight you the way sacrificial priests slight those who have fallen[44] or wives slight oppressive husbands addicted to desire? Is your general bold, brave, intelligent, persevering, pure, well born, loyal and skilled? Are the chief warriors of your army skilled in every kind of warfare and are they known to exhibit great valour and prowess? Do you treat them respectfully? Are your soldiers given their rations and wages on time? Do you know that non-payment of rations and wages on time makes servants angry with their masters? The learned have described this as a great calamity. Are the sons of good families chiefly loyal to you? In the field of battle, are they ever ready to give up their lives for you? In military affairs, is there a single one who is beyond control and causes harm to many

because of selfish reasons? If a man performs an extraordinary act beyond what he is required to do, does he obtain greater honour, rations and wages? Do you reward, with wealth and honour, men who are learned, humble and skilled in any type of knowledge in accordance with their qualities? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Do you support the wives of men who have given up their lives for you and those who have otherwise come to grief for your sake? O Partha! Do you offer protection, like to a son, to an enemy who has been defeated in battle, or surrenders, having become fearful and weak? O lord of the earth! Are you impartial towards everyone on earth and can they fearlessly come to you, like a father or a mother? O bull among the Bharata lineage! When you get to know that an enemy is in distress, do you inspect the three parts of your force[45] and swiftly advance on him, knowing that the rear of the army is the root of defeat? O great king! Do you pay wages to your soldiers in advance? O scorcher of enemies! Do you distribute riches from the enemy kingdom among the chiefs of your army, in accordance with what they deserve? O Partha! After having first controlled your own self and senses, do you seek to defeat enemies who are enslaved by their own passions and senses? Before marching against your enemies, do you first employ the four techniques of sama, dana, danda and bheda,[46] in accordance with their qualities? O lord of the earth! Do you first strengthen your base before marching out? Do you attack to win and having won, do you protect? Does your army have four types of forces[47] and is it divided into eight wings,[48] well trained by superior officers and capable of defeating the enemy? O scorcher of enemies! O great king! When attacking the enemy in battle, surely you do not kill during seasons of sowing and harvesting. Do the various agents in your kingdom and in those of the enemies carry on their appointed tasks and protect each other?

'"O great king! Are the servants who protect your food, garments and perfumes approved by you? Are your treasury, granary, stable, gates, armoury and revenue department guarded well by loyal servants whose virtue has been proved? O lord of the earth! Surely you first protect yourself against your servants, private and public, then protect them from your kinsmen and against each other. Do they know in the forenoon of your pleasures in drinking, gambling and sporting with women?[49] Are expenses covered with half the revenue, or a third or a quarter? Do you always sustain with food and riches your relatives, superiors, the aged, merchants, artisans, dependents, the helpless and the distressed? Do accountants and writers employed to look after revenue and expenditure always report to you in the forenoon about both? Surely you do not dismiss without reason servants who have your welfare at heart, are loyal, are capable and who have not committed errors before. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once you have determined the good, the indifferent and the bad, do you appoint them to the right posts? O lord of the earth! Do you appoint those who are avaricious, prone to

thievery, quarrelsome and are under age? Do you oppress the kingdom with the strength of avaricious thieves, minors and women? Are the farmers content? Are the tanks in the kingdom large and full and placed at right distances, so that the harvest is not destroyed because of lack of rainfall? If food and seeds are scarce, do you grant farmers charitable loans at the rate of one *pratika* for one hundred?[50] O son! Are the professions[51] undertaken by those who are honest? O son! The happiness of the world depends on these professions. O king! Are the five[52] who are entrusted with the five duties brave and wise? Are they to be trusted and do they bring welfare to the countryside by working together? To protect the city, is the village guarded like a city and is the hamlet guarded like a village? Are all the remote parts under your supervision? Are thieves who steal and loot in your cities pursued over uneven and even terrain by your soldiers and forced to flee? Do you comfort and protect the women? But surely you do not trust them, nor reveal any secrets before them.

'"After hearing from your spies and reflecting on what needs to be done and knowing those who happen to be inside,[53] do you sleep comfortably and in security? O lord of the earth! O Pandava! Having slept during the first and second divisions[54] of the night, do you awake in the last[55] and think about dharma and artha? After waking at the right time and knowing the mysteries of time, do you always reveal yourself to men, properly adorned and accompanied by your ministers? O destroyer of enemies! Do guards dressed in red garments, armed with swords and adorned with ornaments, attend to you so as to protect you? O lord of the earth! In punishing those who deserve it and honouring those who deserve it, do you act like Yama, impartial between those you like and those you do not like? O Partha! Do you cure bodily ailments through medicines and restraint and mental ailments by serving the aged? The physicians appointed to look after your body must always be devoted to you and have your welfare at heart and are surely skilled in the eight divisions.[56] O lord of the world! Out of greed, delusion or pride, surely you do not dismiss plaintiffs and defendants who come to you. From greed or delusion, do you withhold a livelihood from men who seek your protection out of love and trust? Do citizens and residents of your kingdom, bought by your enemies, unite and rise up against you? O Yudhishthira! Is your weak enemy restrained with force and is your strong enemy restrained with good counsel or force or both? Are the chief rulers of the land devoted to you? If instructed by you, are they ready to give up their lives for you?

'"For the sake of your own welfare, do you pay homage to brahmanas and righteous ones, in accordance with their learning and qualities? Do you follow dharma with its three[57] sources, as practised by those who have come before you? Do you practise the rituals followed by them? Are brahmanas with good qualities offered tasty food in your house and paid dakshina?[58] With steadfastness of mind and complete self-control, do

you perform *vajapeya*, *pundarika*[59] and other sacrifices? Do you bow in homage before relatives, superiors, gods, ascetics, places of worship, trees that bring welfare to men and brahmanas? O unblemished one! Is your intelligence and conduct like this, so that it bestows long life and fame and helps the cause of dharma, kama and artha? The kingdom of one who conducts himself in this way is never destroyed. Such a king subjugates the earth and attains great happiness. O bull among men! Surely no pure-souled and respected man is falsely charged with theft and put to death by avaricious ones who have no knowledge of the sacred texts and are not skilled. Surely he who is a thief and has been apprehended with stolen goods and tools in front of witnesses is not set free out of covetousness.[60] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Corrupted by bribes, do your advisers see falsely when disputes arise between the poor and the rich? Do you abhor the fourteen royal vices—atheism, falsehood, anger, negligence, procrastination, avoidance of the wise, laziness, restlessness of mind, consultation with only one person, consultation with those who are ignorant of artha, failure to act on something that has been decided, divulgement of counsel, abandonment of beneficial plans and addiction to material objects? Is your study of the Vedas successful? Are your riches successful? Is your marriage successful? Is your learning successful?"

'Yudhishthira asked, "How does the study of the Vedas become successful? How do riches become successful? How does marriage become successful? How does learning become successful?"

'Narada replied, "The Vedas become successful in agnihotra.[61] Riches become successful in consumption and donations. Marriage becomes successful when sons are born through union. Learning becomes successful in good conduct."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the immensely ascetic sage Narada then again questioned the righteous Yudhishthira.

'Narada asked, "O king! Do those who are paid from taxes on trade only take agreed taxes from merchants who come from far away in search of gain? When they bring their wares, are they treated well in your city and kingdom and not cheated with deception? O son! You always know about the ways of dharma and artha. Do you listen to words of dharma and artha from the aged, who always know what brings artha? Are honey and ghee given to brahmanas to increase crops, cattle, flowers, fruit, dharma and artha? Do you always give all the artisans materials, implements and wages for a period up to four months? O great king! Do you examine the work and praise the creator? Do you honour good ones among good people? O bull among the Bharatas! O lord! Do you follow all the sutras, especially those about elephants, horses and chariots? O bull among the Bharatas! Are sutras on the science of arms, instruments and architecture of cities regularly studied in your house? O unblemished one! Are you familiar with all the weapons, *brahma danda*[62] and all poisons that destroy enemies? Do you protect your

kingdom against fear from fire, snakes, predators, disease and rakshasas? Knowing the ways of dharma, do you nurture like a father the blind, the dumb, the crippled, the deformed, the orphaned and mendicant ascetics?"'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words from the best of the brahmanas, the great-souled bull among the Kurus happily bowed down and worshipped his feet. The king spoke to the divine Narada. Yudhishthira said, "I will do what you have instructed, because my wisdom has increased even more." Having said this, the king did as he had been instructed and obtained the earth, up to the boundaries of the ocean. Narada said, "A king who is always engaged in the protection of the four varnas[63] passes his time happily here and attains Shakra's world."'

231(6)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the supreme maharshi finished speaking, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira worshipped him and was given permission to speak. Yudhishthira said, "O illustrious lord! What you have stated as just and dharma is certainly right. I duly observe what is just to the best of my powers. There is no doubt that acts performed by kings in ancient times, and the way in which they were performed, were successful in attaining just and proper objectives. O lord! I wish to walk along that righteous path. But we are not able to walk it the way those self-controlled ones did." Having uttered these words and worshipped him, Yudhishthira, with his soul devoted to dharma, paused for some time. Then seeing that Narada, the sage who travelled the worlds, was comfortably seated and he was seated below him, the immensely wise Pandava asked him in the assembly of kings. Yudhishthira asked, "You always travel the many and varied worlds Brahma created in ancient times, at the speed of thought and like a witness. O brahmana! I am asking you. Tell me if you have ever seen anywhere a sabha like this, or one superior to it." Hearing these words of Dharmaraja, Narada smiled and replied in soft words. Narada said, "O son! O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have never seen nor heard of an assembly hall like the bejewelled one that belongs to you in the world of men. I shall describe to you the sabhas of the king of the ancestors,[64] the wise Varuna, Indra and the one who dwells in Kailasa.[65] O bull among the Bharatas! If your mind wishes to hear, I will also describe Brahma's divine sabha, the dispeller of all fatigue." Having been thus addressed by Narada, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira and his brothers, in that assembly of kings, joined their hands in salutation. The great-souled Dharmaraja then replied to Narada, "Describe to us all those assembly halls. We wish to hear from you. O brahmana! What are those sabhas made of? How long are they and how wide? Who waits upon the grandfather[66] in his sabha? Who on Vasava, king of the gods, and who on Vaivasvata Yama?[67] Who wait on Varuna and Kubera in their sabhas? O devarshi! Tell us. We wish to hear all this exactly.

We have been filled with great curiosity." Having been thus addressed by Pandava, Narada replied, "O king! Then hear about those divine sabhas, one by one."'

232(7)

'Narada said, "O Kourvaya![68] Shakra's divine sabha is radiant and he obtained it as a result of his acts. Shakra built it himself and it possesses the radiance of the sun. It is one hundred *yojanas*[69] wide and one hundred and fifty yojanas long. It is five yojanas high. It is airborne and can roam anywhere at will. It dispels old age, misery and fatigue. It is free from fear, and pure and auspicious. It is full of rooms and seats and is beautiful, adorned with celestial trees. O Partha! O descedant of the Bharata lineage! There is a supreme seat in that sabha and the lord of the gods sits there with Mahendrani Shachi, who is Shri and Lakshmi.[70] His form cannot be described. He wears a crown and red[71] bracelets on his upper arms. He is dressed in spotless garments and adorned with brightly coloured garlands. Hri, Kirti and Dyuti are with him.[72] O king! There the great-souled Shatakratu is always worshipped by all the Maruts, all the householders, the siddhas, the *sadhyas* and the masses of gods. They and their followers are all divine in form and adorned with ornaments. They worshipped the great-souled king of the gods, the vanquisher of enemies.

'"O Partha! All the devarshis worship Shakra. They are unblemished, cleansed of sin, radiant, like the fire in form, without blemish and without fatigue. They are performers of the soma sacrifice—Parashara, Parvata, Savarni, Galava, Shankha, Likhita, the sage Gourashira, Durvasa, Dirghatapa, Yajnavalkya, Bhaluki, Uddalaka, Shvetaketu, the lord Shatyayana, Havishmat, Gavishtha, King Harishchandra, Hridya, Udarashandilya, Parasharya, Krishihvala, Vataskandha, Vishakha, Vidhata, Kala, Anantadanta, Tvashta, Vishvakarma and Tumburu. They were born from wombs and not born from wombs. They lived on air and on fire. All of them worshipped the lord of the worlds, the wielder of the vajra—Sahadeva, Sunitha, the immensely ascetic Valmiki, Shamika, Satyavak, the truthful Prachetas, Medhatithi, Vamadeva, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Marutta, Marichi, the immensely ascetic Sthanu, Atri, Kakshivat, Goutama, Tarkshya, the sage Vaishvanara, the sage Kalakavrikshiya, Ashravya, Hiranyada, Samvartta, Devahavya and the powerful Vishvaksena. O Pandava! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the divine waters and herbs, Shraddha,[73] Medha,[74] Sarasvati,[75] artha, dharma, kama, lightning, clouds bearing rain, the winds, thunder, the eastern direction, the twenty-seven fires that convey sacrificial offerings, Agni, Soma, Indragni, Mitra, Savita, Aryama, Bhaga, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, Shukra, Manthi, the sacrifices, the dakshinas, the planets, all the *stobhas*[76] and all the mantras uttered at sacrifices are seated there. O king! There are also the apsaras and the beautiful gandharvas. With dancing, music and songs, and various other forms of entertainment, they amuse

Shatakratu, the king of the gods. O king of men! With hymns and rituals, they praise the valorous acts of the great-souled destroyer of Bala and Vritra. All the brahmana rajarshis and all the devarshis are there, riding various divine chariots that blaze like the fire. They are garlanded and adorned and all of them come and go. Brihaspati and Shukra go there together. O king! These and many other ascetics who are rigid in their vows, riding chariots that are like the moon and themselves, as handsome as the moon Bhrigu and the seven great sages[77] go there on Brahma's instructions. O king! I have myself seen this sabha of Shatakratu's, named Pushkaramalini. O great king! O unblemished one! Now hear about Yama's."'

233(8)

'Narada said, "O Yudhishthira! Listen. I will now describe Vaivasvata Yama's divine sabha, built by Vishvakarma. O king! O Pandava! That radiant assembly hall is one hundred yojanas long and wide and possesses the resplendence of the sun. It can roam everywhere at will. It pleases the heart and is neither too cold, nor too hot. Grief, old age, hunger, thirst, unpleasantness, misery, fatigue and obstructions are not found there. Every desire, human and divine, is satisfied there. O vanquisher of foes! There is an abundant supply of tasty food and drink. The garlands there have pure fragrances. The trees always bear flowers and fruit. There is tasty water, both hot and cold.

'"O son! Pure rajarshis and unblemished brahmarshis[78] happily attend upon Yama Vaivasvata there—Yayati, Nahusha, Puru, Mandhata, Somaka, Nriga, Trasadasyu, Turaya, Kritavirya, Shrutashrava, Aripranuda, Susimha, Kritavega, Kriti, Nimi, Pratardana, Shibi, Matysa, Prithavaksha, Brihadratha, Aida, Marutta, Kushika, Samkashya, Samkriti, Bhava, Chaturashva, Sadashvormi, the king Kartavirya, Bharata, Suratha, Sunitha, Nala from Nishadha,[79] Divodasa, Sumana, Ambarisha, Bhagiratha, Vyashva, Sadashva, Vadhryashva, Panchahasta, Prithushrava, Rushadgu, Vrishasena, the immensely powerful Kshupa, Rushadashva, Vasumana, Purukutsa, Dhvaji, Rathi, Arshtishena, Dilipa, the great-souled Ushinara, Oushinara, Pundarika, Sharyati, Sharabha, Shuchi, Anga, Arishta, Vena, Duhshanta, Sanjaya, Jaya, Bhangasvari, Sunitha, Nishadha,[80] Tvishiratha, Karandhama, Bahlika,[81] Sudyumna, the powerful Madhu, Kapotaroma, Trinaka, Sahadeva, Arjuna, Dasharathi Rama,[82] Lakshmana, Pratardana, Alarka, Kakshasena, Gaya, Gourashva, Jamadagni Rama,[83] Nabhaga, Sagara, Bhuridyumna, Mahashva, Prithvashva, Janaka, the king Vainya, Varishena, Puraja, Janamejaya, Brahmadatta, Trigarta, King Uparichara, Indradyumna, Bhimajanu, Gaya, Prishtha, the unblemished Naya, Padma, Muchukunda, Bhuridyumna, Prasenajit, Arishtanemi, Pradyumna, Prithagashva, Ajaka, the one hundred kings from Matsya,[84] the hundred Nipas,[85] the hundred Hayas,[86] the one hundred

Dhritarashtras,[87] the eighty Janamejayas,[88] the one hundred Brahmadattas,[89] the one hundred fighting Iris,[90] the rajarshi Shantanu, your father Pandu, Ushadgava, Shataratha, Devaraja, Jayadratha, the rajarshi Vrishadarbhi, Dhaman and his ministers and, in addition, thousands of Shashabindus[91] who departed after performing many great horse sacrifices, with copious donations. O rajarshi! These pure rajarshis, of great fame and renown, waited upon Vaivasvata Yama in his sabha. There were Agastya, Matanga, Kala,[92] Mrityu,[93] performers of sacrifices, Siddhas, those whose bodies are based on yoga, those with fire in their mouths,[94] the ancestors—those who live on froth, those who live on vapours, those who receive oblations, those who seat themselves on kusa grass and those others who have bodies.[95] Free from disease and in embodied form, the wheel of time, the illustrious conveyor of sacrificial offerings,[96] men who performed evil deeds, those who died during the winter solstice, those of Yama's officers appointed to reckon time, *shimshapa*[97] and *palasha*[98] trees, *kasha*,[99] *kusha*[100] and other trees and plants worshipped Dharmaraja.[101] These and many others are the courtiers of the king of the ancestors. O Partha![102] I am incapable of enumerating their names and deeds. But this beautiful sabha is never crowded and is capable of going anywhere at will. Vishvakarma built it after spending a long time in austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It blazes with the luminosity of its own radiance. Ascetics who are fearsome in their austerities, rigid in their vows, truthful, calm, practised in renunciation, accomplished, purified through their holy deeds, all with radiant bodies and all attired in spotless attire, adorned with bracelets on their upper arms and garlands, with flaming earrings, performers of good and holy deeds and marked with signs, go there. Great-souled gandharvas and one hundred classes of apsaras are there, filling it everywhere with instrumental music, dancing, singing, laughter and sport. O Partha! Sacred fragrances and sounds and celestial garlands adorn it everywhere. Ten million righteous and intelligent men, in bodily form, always wait upon the great-souled lord of all beings. O king! Such is the sabha of the great-souled king of the ancestors. I will now describe to you Varuna's sabha, known as Pushkaramalini."'

234(9)

'Narada said, "O Yudhishthira! Varuna's celestial sabha is white in radiance. Its dimensions are exactly like those of Yama's, with white walls and portals. Vishvakarma built it under the water and it is surrounded with divine bejewelled trees, yielding flowers and fruit. It is carpeted with blue, yellow, black, dark, white and red flowers and there are bowers with clusters of blossoms. Hundreds and thousands of beautiful and sweet-toned birds of many varieties are there, with forms impossible to describe. That sabha is pleasant to the touch, not too cold, nor too hot. It is beautiful and white,

ruled by Varuna, with many rooms and seats. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varuna sits there with Varuni,[103] adorned with celestial gems, ornaments and attire. Adorned and ornamented, bedecked with celestial garlands, the Adityas wait upon Varuna, the lord of the water, there. So do Vasuki, Takshaka, the serpent named Airavata, Krishna,[104] Lohita, Padma, the valorous Chitra, the nagas Kambala and Ashvatara, Dhritarashtra, Balahaka, Manimana, Kundaladhara, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya,[105] Prahrada, Mushikada and Janamejaya[106]—all spreading their hoods, marked with pennants and auspicious circular signs. O Yudhisthira! Without ever getting tired, these and many other serpents wait upon the great-souled Varuna—King Vairochana Bali,[107] Naraka the conqueror of the earth,[108] Prahrada, Viprachitti, the danavas known as Kalakhanjas, Suhanu, Durmukha, Shankha, Sumana, Sumati, Ghatodara, Mahaparshva, Krathana, Pithara, Vishvarupa, Surupa, Virupa, Mahashirsa, Dashagriva,[109] Vali,[110] Meghavasa, Dashavara, Kaitabha,[111] Vitatuta, Samhrada, Indratapana. These classes of daityas and danavas are all adorned with beautiful earrings, garlanded and crowned and attired in divine garments. They have been blessed with boons, are brave, and have all transcended mortality. They are all correct in observing their vows and worship the great-souled god Varuna, who holds them in dharma's noose.[112]

'"O Yudhishthira. There are the four oceans,[113] the river Bhagirathi, Kalindi,[114] Vidisha,[115] Venna,[116] Narmada, Vegavahini, Vipasha,[117] Shatadru,[118] Chandrabhaga,[119] Sarasvati,[120] Iravati, Vitasta,[121] Sindhu,[122] Devanada,[123] Godavari, Krishnavenna,[124] Kaveri the best of rivers—these and other rivers, fords and lakes, wells and springs, ponds and tanks, in embodied form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The directions, the earth, all the mountains and all the aquatic creatures worship the great-souled one. All the masses of gandharvas and apsaras, skilled in singing and playing musical instruments, are seated and they praise Varuna. Mountains full of jewels and the juices of herbs are all there in embodied form, worshipping the lord. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such is Varuna's beautiful sabha, which I have myself seen in my earlier travels. Hear now about Kubera's sabha."'

235(10)

'Narada said, "O king! Vaishravana's[125] radiant and white sabha is one hundred yojanas long and seventy yojanas wide. O king! Vaishravana built it himself through the power of his austerities. It has the luminosity of the moon, is established in the sky and is like a peak of the mountain Kailasa. Held aloft by the *guhyakas*,[126] celestial and adorned with tall and golden trees, it seems to be fixed to the firmament. It radiates

rays and is resplendent, fragrant with divine scents. Beautiful and resembling white clouds and mountain peaks, it seems to float in the sky. There sits the handsome King Vaishravana, adorned in lustrous earrings and attired in colourful ornaments and garments. He is surrounded by one thousand women. He is seated on a supreme and pure throne that is as radiant as the sun and is covered with divine spreads, with celestial footstools. Pure and fragrant breezes carry the perfume from extensive coral trees, scented groves, water lilies from the lotus pond known as Alaka[127] and Nandana[128] gardens, please the mind and heart and offer homage.[129] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gods and gandharvas, surrounded by crowds of apsaras, sing divine songs in celestial tones there."

'"There are Mishrakeshi, Rambha, the sweet-smiling Chitrasena, Charunetra, Ghritachi, Menaka, Punjikasthala, Vishvachi, Sahajanya, Pramlocha, Urvashi, Ira, Varga, Sourabheyi, Samichi, Budbuda and Lata. O Pandava! These and a thousand other masses of apsaras, skilled in singing and dancing, pay homage to the granter of riches. With these masses of gandharvas and apsaras, that sabha is never empty and is magnificent, filled with divine music, singing and dancing. There are the gandharvas known as kinnaras and others known as *naras*—anibhadra, Dhanada, Shvetabhadra, Guhyaka, Kasheraka, Gandhakandu, the immensely strong Pradyota, Kustumbura, Pishacha, Gajakarna, Vishalaka, Varahakarna, Sandroshtha, Phalabhaksha, Phalodaka, Angachuda, Shikhavarta, Hemanetra, Vibhishana, Pushpanana, Pingalaka, Shonitoda, Pravalaka, Vrikshavasya, Aniketa, Chitravasa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These, and many other yakshas,[130] in hundreds and thousands, are in attendance. The fortunate Shri and Nalakubara[131] are always there. I and others like me go there often. Many preceptors and devarshis are often present there. O tiger among men! And also the three-eyed[132] illustrious god, Pashupati Umapati,[133] the wielder of the trident, the destroyer of Bhaganetra,[134] with the unblemished goddess,[135] and surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his followers[136]—dwarfs, horrible, hunchbacked, bloody-eyed, swift as thought, feeding on flesh, fat and marrow, fearful to see and hear, wielding many terrible weapons and like powerful wind storms. O king! He[137] is always seated with his friend,[138] the granter of riches. O king! Such is his sabha. I saw it while I was travelling through the sky. O king! I will now tell you about the grandfather's[139] sabha, where all fatigue is dispelled."'

236(11)

'Narada said, "O king! In ancient times, in the era of the gods, the illustrious and indefatigable lord Aditya[140] descended from heaven to see the world of men. O

Pandava![141] He had earlier seen the sabha of the self-creating Brahma and in human form, described it to me, exactly as he had seen it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of Pandu! When I heard about this celestial, immeasurable, indescribable and disembodied sabha, which delights all living beings with its lustre and on learning about its qualities, I wished to see the sabha myself. O king! I then spoke to Aditya. 'O illustrious one! I wish to see the grandfather's sabha. O lord of cattle![142] Through what austerities and what deeds can one see it? O illustrious one! Please tell me what herbs and what powers of maya will allow me to set my eyes on that sabha.' O lord of men! Then the illustrious and valorous Surya[143] took me to Brahma's unblemished sabha, one that knows no fatigue. It is not possible to describe its form exactly. From one moment to another, it takes on an indescribable form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not know its dimensions or its shape. I have never seen such beauty earlier. O king! That sabha always contributes to pleasure. It is neither too hot, nor too cold. As soon as one enters, hunger, thirst and all types of fatigue disappear. It has many different forms. It is beautifully coloured and resplendent. It is not supported by pillars. It does not decay and is eternal. Its self-radiance surpasses that of the moon, the sun and the flaming crest of the fire. On the rafters of the firmament, its radiance lights up the sun itself.

'"O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There sits the illustrious supreme god, the grandfather of all the worlds. Through the powers of his maya, the lord himself, and alone, constantly creates all the beings—Daksha, Pracheta, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Kashyapa, Bhrigu, Atri, Vasishtha, Goutama, Angiras, the mind, the sky, knowledge, wind, energy, water, earth, sound, touch, form, taste and smell, the root cause behind creation and evolution of the world, the moon with the constellations, the sun with its rays, wind, seasons, resolution and breath. Others too numerous to mention wait upon the self-creating one—artha, dharma, kama, bliss, hatred, austerities, self-control. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Pandava! O lord of the earth! The gandharvas and the apsaras go there together, and all the twenty-seven lords of the world,[144] Shukra,[145] Brihaspati,[146] Budha,[147] Angaraka,[148] Shani,[149] Rahu,[150] all the planets, mantra, *rathantara*,[151] Harimat,[152] Vasumat,[153] the Adityas with their lord,[154] all the gods known by diverse double names,[155] the Maruts, Vishvakarma, the Vasus, the classes of ancestors, all the sacrificial offerings, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, all the sacred texts, histories,[156] the minor Vedas, all the Vedangas, cups for soma, sacrifices, all the gods, the distress-removing *Savitri*,[157] seven kinds of speech,[158] understanding, perseverance, learning, wisdom, intelligence, fame, forgiveness, sama hymns, songs of praise, different types of chants and commentaries with their arguments, in embodied form. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! There are *kshana*,[159] *lava*,[160] muhurta,[161] day, night, fortnights, months, the six seasons, years, the five yugas,[162] the four types of day and night,[163] the divine wheel of time that is eternal and indestructible, Aditi, Diti, Danu, Surasa, Vinata, Ira, Kalaka, Devi, Surabhi, Sarama, Goutami, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, Ashvins, Vishvadevas, Sadhyas, ancestors who are as swift as thought, rakshasas, pishachas, danavas, guhyakas,[164] birds, serpents and animals. They worship the grandfather—the god Narayana himself, devarshis, the Valakhilya rishis, those born from wombs and those born from without wombs. O lord of men! Know that I have seen whatever exists in the three worlds, mobile and immobile, there. O Pandava! The eighty thousand rishis who have controlled their seed and the fifty thousand rishis who have offspring, I have seen these and the other dwellers of heaven go there, as they will. All of them worship him by lowering their heads and return as they had come. O king of men! The illustrious and immensely intelligent Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, the self-creator who is infinitely radiant and merciful towards all beings, the soul of the universe, receives their homage and treats them as they deserve, with calm words, honour, riches and objects of pleasure—gods, demons, serpents, sages, yakshas, birds, *kaleyas*,[165] gandharvas and apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O son! That pleasure-giving sabha is always agitated with the comings and goings. It is filled with every form of energy, divine, served by masses of brahmarshis, radiant with Brahma's riches, extremely beautiful and the dispeller of fatigue. O tiger among kings! Just as your sabha is unmatched among men, that sabha is likewise in all the worlds that I have seen. O Pandava! These are the sabhas that I have seen earlier among the gods. Your sabha is supreme to all in the world of men."

'Yudhishthira said, "O lord! O supremely eloquent one! From what you have described, it is as if the entire world of kings is in Vaivasvata's sabha. O illustrious one! You have said that all the serpents, the lords of the daityas, the rivers and the oceans are in Varuna's sabha. And that the yakshas, guhyakas, rakshasas, gandharvas, apsaras and Shiva[166] are in that of the lord of riches.[167] You have said that the maharshis,[168] all the classes of gods and all the sacred texts are in the grandfather's sabha. O sage! You have specifically listed that in Shatakratu's sabha are the gods, the gandharvas and various maharshis. O great sage! You have said that only one rajarshi, Harishchandra, is in the sabha of the great-souled king of the gods. What were his deeds, traits, austerities and rigidity of vows that this famous one alone rivals Shakra? O brahmana! When you went to the world of the ancestors, did you see the immensely fortunate Pandu, my father? O illustrious lord! What did he say? I wish to learn. I wish to hear all this, because my curiosity is great."

'Narada replied, "O lord of kings! O lord! Since you have asked me about the greatness of the wise Harishchandra, I will narrate it to you. He was a powerful king

and sovereign over all the kings on earth. All the kings on earth were under his rule. O lord of men! Riding alone on his invincible chariot that was embellished with gold, he conquered the seven *dvipas*[169] with the power of his weapons. O great king! Having conquered the entire earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, he performed a great royal sacrifice. At his command, all the kings brought riches to that sacrifice and waited upon the brahmanas. That lord of men happily distributed to the priests, then and there, five times what they had asked for. When the rituals were completed, he gratified the brahmanas, who had assembled there from various directions, with many types of riches. The brahmanas, gratified with many types of food and delicacies, honoured with what they desired and satisfied with piles of gems, were satiated and said that he was more energetic and more famous than all the kings. O Partha! O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that it is for this reason that Harishchandra shines more brightly than thousands of other kings. O lord of men! Having completed his great sacrifice, the immensely powerful Harishchandra was instated in his kingdom and looked radiant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whichever king performs the great *rajasuya* sacrifice,[170] blissfully spends his time with Indra after the consecration is over. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who do not flee on the field of battle and are killed, they too attain his abode and spend their time in bliss. Those who give up their bodies after performing terrible austerities, they too go to that place and shine eternally.

'"O Kounteya! Your father Pandu, descendant of the Kuru lineage, was amazed on witnessing King Harishchandra's fortune. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! 'You can conquer the earth. Your brothers follow you. Perform the great rajasuya sacrifice.'[171] O Pandava! O tiger among men! Act upon that wish. With your ancestors, you will then attain the great Indra's world. O king! It is said that this great sacrifice is constrained by many obstacles. *Brahma rakshasas*,[172] destroyers of sacrifices, look for holes. A war may follow it, leading to the destruction of the earth.[173] For a small reason, a terrible destruction may ensue. O lord of kings! Reflect on this and do what is good for you. Always be watchful in protecting the four varnas. Grow prosperous. Rejoice. Gratify the brahmanas with gifts. Thus have I described in detail all that you asked me to. With your permission, I shall now leave for the city of the Dasharhas."'[174]

Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! O king! After having said this to Partha, Narada went away with all the rishis with whom he had come. O Kourava! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Narada had left, Partha and his brothers began to think about performing the supreme royal sacrifice.'

Section Twenty-One

Mantra Parva

This parva has 222 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 237(12): 40 shlokas
Chapter 238(13): 68 shlokas
Chapter 239(14): 20 shlokas
Chapter 240(15): 16 shlokas
Chapter 241(16): 51 shlokas
Chapter 242(17): 27 shlokas

The word mantra has different meanings, but here it means a process of consultation. This section is therefore about a process of consultation prior to the royal sacrifice.

237(12)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of the rishi, Yudhishthira sighed and thinking about performing rajasuya, could find no peace. He had heard about the glory of the great-souled rajarshis and had learnt that they had attained the pure worlds through their deeds and sacrifices. In particular, he thought about rajarshi Harishchandra, who had performed the sacrifice, and thought about performing rajasuya. Having honoured all those who were present in his sabha, and having been honoured by them in return, he consulted them about the sacrifice. The lord of kings and bull among the Kuru lineage, after reflecting a great deal, made up his mind to perform rajasuya. King Yudhishthira, protector of dharma, supreme among those who know all dharma, attentive to his subjects and always acting for the welfare of everyone without distinction, extraordinary in his energy and power, reflected on what would bring welfare to all the worlds. Having thus conducted himself and having thus reassured everyone like a father, no one could be seen who hated him and he came to be known as Ajatashatru.[1]

'That supreme among eloquent ones assembled his advisers and brothers and repeatedly asked them about rajasuya. Having been thus asked by the immensely wise Yudhishthira, who was eager to perform the sacrifice, the advisers then uttered words that were deep with meaning. "A consecrated king who wishes to achieve the characteristics of an emperor and attain the traits of Varuna, performs this rite, even though he is a king. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You are worthy of the status of an emperor and all your well-wishers think that the time has come for you to perform rajasuya. The time for the sacrifice, in which priests rigid in their vows establish six fires[2] to the chants of sama, is free and depends on kshatriya riches.[3] At the completion

of the sacrifice, after offering all the oblations, the performer is consecrated as a universal emperor. O mighty-armed one! All of us serve you and you are capable. O great king! Do not reflect any more and set your mind on the rajasuya." Separately and together, thus did his well-wishers speak. O lord of the earth! Having heard these words, full of dharma, bold, pleasant and supreme, Pandava accepted them in his mind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of his well-wishers and knowing himself to be capable, he repeatedly reflected in his mind about rajasuya. The wise one again consulted his brothers, great-souled priests and advisers like Dhoumya and Dvaipayana.

'Yudhishthira asked, "How can this great rajasuya, worthy of an emperor and one I wish to perform, be accomplished?" O lotus-eyed one! Having been thus asked by the king, they then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, the one with dharma in his soul. "O king! You are learned in the ways of dharma. You are worthy of performing the great sacrifice of rajasuya." When the priests and sages uttered these words, his advisers and brothers applauded them. The immensely wise and self-controlled Partha, always desirous of the welfare of the worlds, thought again. A wise one who considers his powers, capacity, time, place, income and expenditure and acts with complete deliberation, never perishes. He thought that a sacrifice begun only with his one desire might bring ruin. Carefully bearing the weight on his shoulders, his thoughts went out to Krishna Janardana, as the right person to decide the course of action. Hari, supreme in all the worlds, is immeasurable, mighty-armed and without birth, born among men only because of his own wishes. His feats rival those of the gods and there is nothing that is not the consequence of his deeds. There is nothing that he cannot bear. Thus it was that Pandava thought of Krishna. Having arrived at this final conclusion, Partha Yudhishthira, swiftly sent a messenger to one who was like his preceptor and the preceptor of all beings.

'Riding a swift chariot, the messenger soon reached the Yadavas and the Dvaraka-residing Krishna in Dvaravati. Hearing that Partha was eager to see him, Achyuta[4] was also eager to see him and went to Indraprastha with Indrasena.[5] Travelling through many countries on the swift mounts, Janardana reached Partha in Indraprastha. Dharmaraja showed him homage in his house, like to a brother. So did Bhima. With a gladdened heart, he[6] then went to see his father's sister.[7] After that he sported himself with his beloved well-wisher, Arjuna, and like a preceptor, was worshipped by the twins. After he had rested himself in that pleasant place for some time and was refreshed, Dharmaraja came to him and told him about his plans. Yudhishthira said, "O Krishna! I wish to perform rajasuya. But it cannot be performed merely through my wishing it. You are omniscient. You are the one in whom everything is possible and you are the one who is worshipped everywhere. The king who is the lord of everything can perform rajasuya. O Krishna! My well-wishers have said that I should perform it. But my

final decision will certainly be in consonance with what you say. Out of friendship, some do not notice faults. Out of desire for riches, some say that which is pleasant to hear. Some consider that to be the best course of action which brings them self-gain. It is often seen that people's advice is like this. You alone are above all motives, beyond desire and anger. You should tell me that which is supreme, for the welfare of the worlds."'

238(13)

'Krishna said, "O great king! Because of all your qualities, you are capable of performing rajasuya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though you know everything, I shall tell you something. Those who are known as kshatriyas in this world are remnants from kshatriyas who were exterminated by Jamadagni Rama.[8] O lord of the earth! O bull among the Bharata lineage! You know about the rules and the authority of words those kshatriyas established to decide lineage. All the kings and all the hierarchies of kshatriyas on this earth claim descent from Aila[9] and Ikshvaku.[10] O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that the kings from Aila's lineage and those from Ikshvaku's lineage constitute one hundred and one dynasties. O great king! The descendants of Yayati and Bhoja are also great in number and qualities and extend in the four directions. They and their prosperity are worshipped everywhere by the kshatriyas.

'"However, after having enjoyed the middle kingdom,[11] a king named Chaturyu,[12] one of the one hundred and one dynasties, wished to create dissension among them. Jarasandha has inherited the empire by birth and that king's influence extends everywhere. O king! O great king! The powerful Shishupala has gone to him like a disciple and has become his general. Vakra, the immensely strong king of Karusha, who fights with the powers of maya, and many other immensely valorous and great-souled ones, are also under his protection. The illustrious Hamsa and Dibhaka are also with the immensely valorous Jarasandha. And there are Dantavakra, Karusha,[13] Kalabha and Meghavahana. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhagadatta was your father's old friend. On his forehead he wears a divine gem that is known as the supreme gem on earth. He is the one who punished the two *yavana*[14] kings Mura and Naraka and now, with unlimited powers like Varuna, is the king of the west.[15] Though he has lowered his head[16] through his speech and especially his deeds, his heart actually holds affection for you, like a father does. Your brave maternal uncle, Purujit, the extender of the Kuru lineage and the scorcher of his enemies, rules in the south-west extremities of the earth and is the only king who is affectionately loyal to you. Likewise, the evil king of the Chedis,[17] whom I did not kill earlier, has also gone over to Jarasandha. He is

known in the world as the supreme being and out of delusion, always bears my signs.[18] There is also a king powerful in Vanga,[19] Pundra and Kirata,[20] known as Vasudeva of Pundra. O great king! There is also the powerful Bhishmaka Chaturyu[21] of Bhoja, a friend of Indra's and a slayer of enemies. Through his learning and strength, he has conquered Pandya[22] and Krathakaishika. The valorous Ahriti is his brother and is like Jamadagni Rama in battle. They also serve the king of Magadha.[23] We are his relatives[24] and always do what is agreeable to him. But though we honour him, he doesn't honour us and always does what is disagreeable to us. O king! Without bearing in mind his lineage and his strength, he has only seen Jarasandha's blazing fame and has placed himself under him. O lord! Out of fear for Jarasandha, the eighteen branches of the northern Bhojas have fled to the west and so have the Shurasenas, the Bhadrakaras, the Bodhas, the Shalvas, the Patachcharas, the Sustharas, the Sukuttas, the Kunindas and the Kuntis. The kings of the Shalveyas, together with their brothers and attendants, the southern Panchalas and the eastern Koshalas from the Kunti region have also fled. Out of oppressive fear for Jarasandha, the Matsyas and the Samnyastapadas have left the north in terror and fled to the south. All the Panchalas have abandoned their own kingdoms and fled in all directions.

'"Some time earlier, Kamsa,[25] mindless in folly, oppressed his relatives and married the two daughters of Brihadratha's son,[26] making them his queens. They are named Asti and Prapti and are Sahadeva's younger sisters. Strengthened by this alliance, that foolish one oppressed his relatives and became superior to all of them, though this brought him great ignominy. The evil-hearted one then oppressed the elders among the Bhoja kings and in a desire to save their relatives, they concluded an alliance with us. I served my relatives by marrying off Ahuka's daughter, Sutanu, to Akrura.[27] Then, with Samkarshana[28] acting as my second, I killed Kamsa and Sunama, with Rama's[29] assistance. O king! Though that immediate danger was averted, Jarasandha rose up in arms against us. The eighteen branches of the Yadavas consulted among themselves. Even if one killed with mighty weapons that can kill a hundred at a time,[30] one would not be able to kill him in three hundred years, because he had two supreme warriors named Hamsa and Dibhaka.[31] They were the strongest of the strong, with power like that of the immortals. When the valorous Jarasandha was united with these two brave warriors, there was no one in the three worlds who could vanquish them. Such was my view. O supremely wise among wise ones! This was not only my view. It was the view of all the kings who exist. O king! The great king famous as Hamsa was engaged in battle for eighteen days. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A rumour spread that Hamsa had been killed. On hearing that Hamsa had been killed, Dibhaka decided that he could not continue to live in this world without Hamsa. He drowned himself in the

Yamuna and, in this way, met his death. When Hamsa, the vanquisher of enemy cities, heard the news about Dibhaka, he too immersed himself in the Yamuna and drowned. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When King Jarasandha heard about their deaths in the water, he left Shurasena[32] and returned to his own city.

'"When that enemy-killing king retreated, we were delighted and began to live happily in Mathura again. But the lotus-eyed wife of Kamsa, Jarasandha's daughter, went to her father, the king of Magadha. O lord of kings! O destroyer of enemies! She repeatedly urged him to kill her husband's killer. O great king! We remembered the advice we had given ourselves at the earlier council. O lord of men! Distracted at heart, we fled. O king! We divided our great riches into small portions and out of fear for him, fled separately, with our riches, kin and relatives. After thinking about this, we sought refuge in the western directions. O king! There is a beautiful city known as Kushasthali,[33] adorned by Mount Raivata.[34] We began to live there. We repaired its fortifications so that it became impregnable even to the gods. It was not just the bulls among the Vrishnis, even the women were capable of fighting from there. O killer of enemies! Without any fear, we now live there. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! When we look at the entry to that mountain, known as Madhavitirtha, we Madhavas have found supreme happiness.[35]

'"With our strength, we were capable of withstanding Jarasandha's oppression. But we have resolved to seek refuge with you. Our habitation is three yojanas deep and extends for three yojanas. At intervals of one yojana, there are one hundred gates and the portals are guarded by brave and valorous kshatriyas from the eighteen branches.[36] There are eighteen thousand warriors in our lineage. Ahuka has one hundred sons and each of them has three hundred more. Charudeshna and his brother,[37] Chakradeva, Satyaki, I myself, Rohini's son,[38] Samba who matches Shouri[39] in battle—these are the seven atirathas.[40] O king! Now listen to the others—Kritavarma, Anadhrishti, Samika, Samitinjaya, Kahva, Shanku and Nidanta, these seven are maharathas. The old king Andhakabhoja and his two sons make ten.[41] They are brave, capable of destroying the worlds, valorous and endowed with immense strength. They have now remembered the middle country[42] and live there, among the Vrishnis. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You alone possess the qualities of becoming a universal emperor. You are capable of becoming the sovereign of the kshatriyas. O king! But in my view, you are incapable of performing the rajasuya as long as the immensely powerful Jarasandha is alive. He has conquered and imprisoned all the kings in Girivraja,[43] the way a lion imprisons giant elephants in a cavern in that king of mountains.[44] That king Jarasandha wishes to sacrifice the lords of the earth. It was after worshipping Mahadeva that he defeated the kings on the field of battle. After

having defeated the vanquished kings and their followers, he took them in fetters to his city and built a prison for men. O great king! Out of fear for Jarasandha, we too have had to abandon Mathura and have fled to the city of Dvaravati. O great king! If you wish to perform the sacrifice, seek to set them free and kill Jarasandha. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Without this, your sacrifice cannot commence. O supreme among those who are wise! This alone can lead to rajasuya. O king! O unblemished one! This is my view. Do you think otherwise? After reflecting on everything yourself and on cause and effect, tell us what is appropriate."'

239(14)

'Yudhishthira said, "Because you are wise, you have said what no one else could have said. No one can be seen on earth who dispels doubts the way you do. In each and every household, there are kings who do that which is for the welfare of their own. But none of them has attained the status of emperor, because the title of emperor encompasses everything. One who knows the power of others does not praise himself. He who is praised in comparison with others is worshipped. The earth is large and extensive and covered with many gems. O extender of the Vrishni lineage! It is by travelling far that one gets to know what is best. I consider tranquillity to be supreme, because from that freedom follows. I do not think the highest goal can be attained if I begin this rite. O Janardana! The wise ones who are born in every lineage know this. Sometimes, one among them will become supreme."

'Bhima said, "A king who has no enterprise is like an anthill. One who tries to rule a stronger one without a plan is weak. But if the plan is right, even a weak and enterprising king can defeat a strong enemy and attain goals that bring one's welfare. There is plan in Krishna, strength in me and victory in Partha Dhananjaya. Like three sacrificial fires, we will consume Magadha."[45]

'Krishna said, "A child grasps, without understanding the consequences of the action. Therefore, an enemy of immature understanding is not tolerated. We have heard that five have become emperors—Youvanashva by eliminating taxes, Bhagiratha through protection,[46] Kartavirya through the power of his austerities, the lord Bharata through his power and Marutta through his wealth. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that in accordance with the principles of dharma and artha, Brihadratha's son Jarasandha is now the one to be punished. One hundred and one dynasties of kings have failed to accept his suzerainty and he therefore claims his empire through force. Kings who possess jewels offer him homage. Since he has been evil from childhood, he is not content even with that. He uses force to conquer foremost men and kings who have been anointed. Not a single man can be seen who does not offer him tribute. O Partha! Thus has he brought under his power those kings, who number almost one hundred. How can a weaker king advance on him with hostile intent? O bull among the Bharata

lineage! How can those kings, who have been cleaned and washed like animals in Pashupati's house,[47] be happy with their fate? It has been said that a kshatriya is honoured when he is killed by weapons. Why should we then not collectively oppose the Magadha? O king! Jarasandha has already brought under his sway eighty-six kings and waits for the others to complete his cruel act.[48] He who obstructs him from accomplishing this will obtain blazing fame. He who defeats Jarasandha will certainly become emperor."'

240(15)

'Yudhishthira said, "Intent on my selfish interest of becoming an emperor, how can I force you to go out, depending on strength and courage alone? Bhima and Arjuna are my eyes and you, Janardana, are my mind. What kind of life will be left for me without my eyes and my mind? When you have met Jarasandha's invincible and valorous forces, exhaustion alone will defeat you. What will your efforts serve? There is disaster if the opposite of what is intended becomes the outcome. O Janardana! Listen to my thoughts. I think it best to always refrain from this course of action. My heart is against it. The rajasuya is too difficult to accomplish."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Partha,[49] who had obtained the supreme bow, the two inexhaustible quivers, the chariot, the pennant and the sabha,[50] now spoke these words to Yudhishthira. "O king! I have obtained the bow, weapons, arrows, valour, allies, land, fame and strength. Though they are desired, it is difficult to achieve them. Those who are learned always praise the greatness of noble lineage. But nothing equals power and nothing pleases me as much as valour. What purpose is served if one is born in noble lineage, but has no valour? O king! A kshatriya's livelihood is always defeat.[51] He who has valour, but lacks all other qualities, will still vanquish his enemies. What purpose is served if one possesses all the qualities, but lacks valour? All qualities exist in nascent form in valour. Mental concentration, enterprise and fortune are the causes of victory. One who possesses the forces, but is careless, does not succeed and is not favoured by fortune. It is because of this that a powerful one perishes when confronted with his foes. Misery encompasses those without strength and also strong ones who are deluded. A king who wishes to attain victory must forsake both these routes to destruction. There is nothing that can surpass the act of destroying Jarasandha and freeing the kings when achieving the sacrifice. If we do not attempt this, we will certainly be regarded as bereft of all qualities. O king! We certainly possess the qualities. Why do you doubt our qualities? Red garments are easily available to those who later wish to obtain peace of mind.[52] But wishing to see you emperor first, we will therefore fight with the enemy."'

'Vasudeva said, "Arjuna has exhibited the mind of one born in the Bharata lineage, especially of one who is Kunti's son. We do not know the time of our death, whether it will be night or day. Nor have we heard of anyone attaining immortality by avoiding battle. For any man, the act that pleases the heart is one of attacking enemies in accordance with principles that are laid down. Any encounter guided by good policy attains success. However, if both sides are equal, there is uncertainty.[53] But equality between the two never happens. If that is the case, why should we not adopt a policy to approach the enemy and destroy him like a river destroying a tree? We will cover our weaknesses and exploit those of the enemy. It is the policy of the intelligent not to attack stronger enemies with battle formations and armies. This appeals to me too. If we can enter the enemy's abode without armies, attack him and attain our objective, we will not be blamed. O bull among men! He[54] alone enjoys eternal royal fortune, like the soul of all beings. But if he perishes, his forces perish. Desiring to free our relatives, even if we are killed by his survivors after we have killed him in battle, we will attain heaven."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O Krishna! Who is this Jarasandha? What is his valour and his prowess that he has not been burnt up when he touched you, like a moth before a flame?"

'Krishna replied, "O king! Listen to Jarasandha's valour and prowess. Learn why he has been spared by us, though he has caused us displeasure in many ways. There was a king named Brihadratha. He was the powerful ruler and lord of Magadha. He was proud in battle and had three *akshouhinis*.[55] He was handsome, valorous, fortunate and extremely powerful. His body always had sacrificial marks and he had the appearance of a second Shakra. He was like the sun's energy, like the earth in forbearance, like the destroyer Yama in his anger and like Vaishravana[56] in prosperity. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! Like the rays of the sun, the entire earth was covered by qualities his noble lineage brought. O bull among those of the Bharata lineage! That immensely valorous one married the twin daughters of the king of Kashi, blessed with beauty and riches. That bull among men had a contract in the presence of his wives that he would love them equally and not show preferences. O lord of men! This king then shone with his beloved and suitable wives, like elephant with two she-elephants. Between them, the lord of the earth was resplendent, like the embodied ocean between the Ganga and the Yamuna. His youth passed away, immersed in pleasures. But no son was born to him to carry forward his lineage, though he performed many auspicious rites, oblations and sacrifices, so as to obtain a son. But the best of kings did not obtain a son to extend his lineage. One day, he heard that Chandakoushika, the son of the great-souled Kakshivat, descended from Goutama, had become tired of ascetic pursuits.

Roaming as he willed, he had come and had sought shelter under a tree. The king and his wives satisfied him with offerings of all kinds of jewels. That supreme among rishis was always truthful and devoted to the truth. He spoke to the king thus. 'O king! I am satisfied with you, you who are devoted to your vows. Ask for a boon.' Brihadratha and his wives bowed down before him. In a voice choked with tears of despair, since there was no prospect of setting eyes on a son, Brihadratha said, 'O illustrious lord! I am about to give up my kingdom and depart for the austerities of the forest. I am unfortunate. What will I do with a boon or with the kingdom?' On hearing this, the sage, seated under the shade of a mango tree, controlled his senses and began to meditate.

'"A mango fell into the lap of the seated sage. It was whole, without holes and without being touched by the beaks of birds. That supreme among sages picked it up, and pronouncing a mantra over it, handed the king that unblemished fruit, as means of obtaining a son. The immensely wise great sage spoke to the king. 'O king! Depart. Your wish has been fulfilled. O lord of men! Return.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Remembering the contract, that supreme of kings gave the single fruit to his two wives. Dividing the fruit into two equal parts, the beautiful ones ate it. The sage always spoke the truth and what he had said was certain. They both conceived as a result of eating the fruit. On seeing them, the king became extremely happy. O king! O immensely wise one! After some time, when the appropriate time arrived, the two queens gave birth to two half-bodies. Each had one eye, one arm, one leg, half a stomach, half a face and half a buttock. At the sight of these half-bodies, the two of them were miserable and trembled. The anxious sisters consulted each other. In great misery, they abandoned the two half-bodies, though they had life in them. The two midwives carefully wrapped up those imperfectly born half-bodies and left the inner quarters through a back gate. Discarding them, they returned in haste.

'"O tiger among men! There was a rakshasa woman named Jara and she noticed them, where they had been thrown at a crossroad. She lived on flesh and blood. Driven by destiny, that rakshasa woman united the two bodies, as it would become easier to carry. O bull among men! As soon as the two halves were united, they became one body and a brave child emerged. O king! The rakshasa woman's eyes widened in amazement. She was no longer able to carry the child, whose body was as hard as a vajra. The child balled his copper-red hands into fists, inserted them in his mouth and began to roar, like a monsoon cloud heavy with rain. O tiger among men! O destroyer of enemies! Extremely alarmed at this sound, the inmates of the inner quarters rushed out, together with the king. Weak and jaded, though their breasts were full of milk, the two queens suddenly came out and reclaimed their son. On seeing them in that condition and on seeing the king, who was so desirous of obtaining a son, and also on seeing the strong child, the rakshasa woman reflected, 'I live in the kingdom of a king who desires to

obtain a son. Therefore, I should not carry off this small child, like a strip of cloud hides the sun.' Assuming human form, she spoke to the lord of men. The rakshasa said, 'O Brihadratha! This is your son. Accept him from me as a gift. He was born in the wombs of your two wives, as a result of the boon granted by the brahmana. He was abandoned by the midwives, but has been saved by me.' O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! At that, on obtaining the son, the beautiful daughters of the king of Kashi sprinkled him with the milk that was gushing out. Having seen all this and understood, the king was delighted. In human form, with a complexion like that of pure gold, the rakshasa woman did not look like a rakshasa at all. The king asked, 'Who are you, as golden as the womb of a lotus? You have given me my son. O fortunate one! You appear to me like a goddess. Please speak.'"'

242(17)

'"The rakshasa said, 'O lord of kings! O fortunate one! I am a rakshasa woman named Jara, who can assume any form at will. Worshipped by everyone, I live happily in your habitation. O righteous one! O king! Therefore, I have always thought about offering you a favour in return. It so happened that I saw the two half-bodies of your son. On my accidentally uniting them, the son surfaced. O great king! This was because of your own good fortune. I was only the instrument.'"

'Krishna said, "O king! Having said this, she disappeared, then and there. The king picked up the boy and entered his own house. The king then performed all the necessary rites for the child. He commanded that a great festival should be held in Magadha in honour of the rakshasa. The father was the equal of Prajapati[57] and bestowed a name on him. Since he had been united by Jara, he came to be known as Jarasandha.[58] The son of the king of Magadha grew up and became endowed with great energy, large and strong like a fire into which oblations have been offered.

'"After some time had passed, Chandakoushika, the illustrious and great ascetic, once again came to Magadha. Delighted at his arrival, Brihadratha went out with his advisers, subjects, wives and son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king showed him homage with water for washing the feet, gifts due to a guest and water to wash his mouth. Then he offered him his son and his kingdom. O king! The illustrious rishi accepted the king's worship and with a happy heart, told the one from Magadha,[59] 'O king! Everything is known to me through my divine sight. O Indra among kings! Listen to what will happen to your son. No king will be able to equal this valorous one in valour. O lord of the earth! Like the currents of rivers make no impression on mountains, weapons hurled by the gods will cause him no pain. He will blaze forth over the heads of all those who have been consecrated[60] and rob their light the way the sun shines over the lights of stars. Like moths to a flame, kings who possess large armies and

mounts will meet their destruction before him. Like the lord of rivers and rivulets[61] receives swollen river water during the monsoon, he will seize the combined prosperity of all the kings. Like the earth, the abode of all crops, extensively supports good and evil, with immense strength, he will justly uphold the four varnas. All the rulers of men will be under his subjugation, just as all beings are subservient to the breath of life in their bodies. This Magadha,[62] immensely stronger than everything in all the worlds, will witness with his own eyes Rudra Mahadeva Hara, the destroyer of Tripura.'[63] O destroyer of your enemies! Having said this, the sage thought about all the acts he had to perform and dismissed King Brihadratha.

'"With his relatives and kin, the ruler of Magadha returned to his city and instated Jarasandha. King Brihadratha became detached from worldly pleasures. After instating Jarasandha, King Brihadratha, followed by his two wives, then left for the forest to lead a life of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After his father and two mothers had retired to the forest for austerities, Jarasandha subjugated the kings with his own valour. After a long time of austerities in the forest, King Brihadratha and his wives attained heaven by virtue of their austerities. He had Hamsa and Dibhaka, incapable of being killed with any weapons. They were best among the intelligent in their counsel and skilled in the art of war. I have already told you about these mighty ones earlier. My view is that these three were more than a match for the three worlds. O valorous one! O great king! Such is the one whom the powerful Kukuras, Andhakas and Vrishnis[64] ignored, because that was the right policy."'

Section Twenty-Two

Jarasandha-vadha Parva

This section has 195 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 243(18): 30 shlokas
Chapter 244(19): 50 shlokas
Chapter 245(20): 34 shlokas
Chapter 246(21): 23 shlokas
Chapter 247(22): 58 shlokas

The word vadha *is the act of killing. This section is therefore about the killing of Jarasandha.*

243(18)

'Vasudeva said, "Hamsa and Dibhaka have fallen. Kamsa and his advisers have been killed. The time has therefore arrived for Jarasandha's killing. He is incapable of being defeated in battle by all the gods and the demons. But we understand he is capable of being vanquished in a battle of breath.[1] Policy exists in me. Power exists in Bhima. Valour exists in Arjuna. O king! We will overcome him like three fires. If that lord of men is confronted by the three of us alone, there is no doubt that he will engage one of us in a duel. Out of contempt for the worlds and his pride in himself, he will certainly challenge Bhimasena to a duel. The mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhimasena is his match, like death is of the worlds that confront their destruction. If your heart knows and if you have confidence in me, then, without losing any more time, entrust Bhimasena and Arjuna to me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by that illustrious one and on seeing Bhima and Partha[2] standing there with smiles on their faces, Yudhishthira replied, "O Achyuta! O Achyuta! Do not speak to me in that fashion. You are the lord of the Pandavas. We seek refuge with you. O Govinda! Everything that you have said is right. You never lead those whom Lakshmi has forsaken. As I follow your instruction, Jarasandha is dead. The kings have been set free. I have achieved the rajasuya. O supreme among men! You are the one who acts fast. Act so that I can accomplish this task for the world. Like a miserable and diseased man and like one without dharma, kama and artha, I have no incentive to live without the three of you. There is no Partha[3] without Shouri[4] and there is no Shouri without Pandava.[5] It is my view that there is nothing in the world that cannot be conquered by the two Krishnas.[6] This handsome Vrikodara is supreme among all strong ones. What can this immensely famous and valorous one not accomplish when he is with the two of you? When led

properly, forces perform supreme deeds. The learned say that forces without skilled leadership are blind and benumbed. The wise always conduct water to places that are low. Those who are wise always lead their forces to places where there are holes.[7] For accomplishing our task, we will therefore seek refuge with Govinda, who is a man famous in the worlds and is knowledgeable about policy. Krishna's strength comes from his wisdom and he knows the method and the means. If one wishes to accomplish one's objectives, one should place him at the forefront. For the accomplishment of our objective, let Partha Arjuna follow Krishna, the best of the Yadavas, and let Bhima follow Dhananjaya. Policy, victory and strength will find success in valour." Having been thus addressed, the three brothers,[8] Varshneya and the two Pandavas, left for Magadha.

'They were radiant in the attire of brahmanas who had completed their studies.[9] Their well-wishers bade them farewell with affectionate words. Their bodies were like the sun, the moon and the fire. Inflamed with anger at the oppression of their relatives, their bodies were then terrible to behold. On seeing the two Krishnas, invincible in battle, united in the same purpose and with Bhima at their forefront, it was thought that Jarasandha was already dead. The two great-souled ones were the lords of all deeds, everything that drove the deeds of dharma, artha and kama. Having left the land of the Kurus, and traversing the middle of Kurujangala,[10] they reached the beautiful Padmasara[11] and traversed Kalakuta.[12] They then crossed Gandaki and Shona and Sadanira.[13] All these rivers arise from that same mountain. After crossing the beautiful Sarayu, they saw the eastern Koshala kingdom.[14] Passing through it, they went to Mithila, crossing the rivers Mala and Charmanvati.[15] Crossing the Ganga and the Shona, all the three headed eastwards and arrived at the indestructibe region of Magadha, covered with *kurava* trees.[16] Ascending Mount Goratha, they saw the city of Magadha,[17] always resplendent with cattle, overflowing with water and full of beautiful groves.'

244(19)

'Vasudeva said, "O Partha! This is the great and beautiful city of Magadha. It is rich in cattle and is always full of water. It is prosperous and has no disease and has many splendid mansions. O *tata*![18] There are five large mountains, the extensive Vaihara, Varaha, Vrishabha, Rishigiri and the beautiful Chaitya.[19] These five giant mountain peaks are covered with trees with cool shade and though separate, seem to collectively protect Girivraja. They seem to be concealed in a forest of fragrant and beautiful *lodhra* trees,[20] beloved by lovers, and with the tips of their branches covered with blossoms. It

was here that the great-souled sage Goutama, rigid in his vows, begot on Ushinara's shudra daughter, sons like Kakshivana. Because he lived here in this place and because the kings here showed him homage, Goutama loved the Magadha lineage. O Arjuna! It was here that, once upon a time, Anga, Vanga and other greatly powerful kings came to Goutama's abode and found happiness. O Partha! Behold the beautiful array of *priyalas*[21] and the charming lodhras, growing near Goutama's abode. Arbuda and Shakravapi, serpents who scorched their enemies, lived here. This was the abode of Svastika and the supreme serpent Mani. Because of Mani, Magadha is never avoided by clouds.[22] Koushika and Goutama have indeed extended their favours here. Jarasandha imagines that the success of his objectives will continue. But we are about to attack him and today, his pride will be struck down."'

Vaishampayana said, 'After these words, all the brothers, Varshneya and the two Pandavas, with immense vigour, started for the city of Magadha and neared the impregnable Girivraja. The city was full of cheerful and healthy citizens, with large numbers of the four varnas and enlivened with festivities. They avoided the giant mountain that was the gate of the city, a place where Brihadratha's descendants and the citizens used to worship. That is the place where Brihadratha killed the bean-eating Rishabha.[23] Having killed the bean-eater, he had three kettledrums made and stretching the hide over them, had these placed in his city.[24] There, divine blossoms showered when the kettledrums were sounded. They rushed to the end where Chaitya[25] was, beloved by inhabitants of Magadha. In their desire to kill Jarasandha, it was like placing their feet on his head.[26] The peak was fixed, immensely large and ancient. It was always worshipped with flowers and garlands and was firmly established. With their large and mighty arms, the heroes broke it down.[27] They then saw the city of Magadha and entered it.

'At that time, the priests were showing homage to King Jarasandha. While he was seated on an elephant, they carried the sacred fire around him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The three of them entered, ready to do battle with Jarasandha, dressed as devoted snatakas, and with no weapons other than their bare arms. They saw the supremely prosperous shops, stocked with food and garlands, swollen with objects of every quality and with every object that satisfies desire. Having witnessed the prosperity along the streets, those supreme of men, Krishna, Bhima and Dhananjaya, proceeded along the royal road and those immensely powerful ones forcibly grabbed garlands from a garland-maker. Then, attired in many-coloured garments, adorned with garlands and beautiful earrings, they entered the palace of the wise Jarasandha, like lions from the Himalayas looking at a pen full of cattle. O great king! The arms of those mighty-armed warriors were smeared with sandal and aloe paste. They shone in radiance, like pillars made of rock. On seeing them, as large as elephants, with

shoulders and chests as tall and broad as shala trees, the inhabitants of Magadha were astounded. Those bulls among men, immensely strong, passed through three rooms that were full of people and proudly arrived before the king.

'Jarasandha arose and greeted them and showed them homage with water to wash the feet, gifts due to a guest and a mixture with honey,[28] as is prescribed. Having shown these courtesies, the lordly king welcomed them. O king! This was because this was the vow, famous on earth, which he followed. Whenever he learned that snataka brahmanas had arrived, even if it was the middle of the night, the king who was a conqueror arose to greet them. On seeing their strange attire, Jarasandha, supreme among kings, approached them and was astonished. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! As soon as those bulls among men and slayers of enemies saw Jarasandha, they spoke thus. "O king! May there be health and welfare for you in everything." O tiger among kings! Having said this, they stood there, looking at the king and at each other. O Indra among kings! Jarasandha then told the Pandavas and the Yadava, who were disguised as brahmanas, "Please be seated." Blazing in radiance like fires at a sacrifice, those three bulls among men then took their seats.

'O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Then King Jarasandha, always devoted to the truth, spoke to them in a tone of disapproval, because of the way they were dressed, "This much is known to me. Nowhere on earth, nowhere in the world of men, do brahmanas who observe the snataka vow ever outwardly adorn themselves with garlands or fragrant paste. Who are you, thus adorned in flowers, though your arms bear the marks of wielding bowstrings? You seem to be brahmanas, but you bear the proud signs of kshatriyas. You are dressed in colourful attire and you outwardly sport garlands and fragrant paste. Tell me who you truly are, truth is the ornament of kings. Why did you break down the Chaitya mountain and enter my abode by means other than through the proper gate? Are you so fearless as to insult the king? This act does not mesh with your purported character. So tell me what your intention is. The brahmana's valour is particularly in his speech. You have arrived before me in this inappropriate way and you decline to accept the homage I offer you in courtesy. Why have you come to me?" At these words, the great-souled Krishna, skilled in the use of words, replied in words that were both serene and grave. "O king! Know that brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas all possess the right to observe snataka vows. There are rules that are general and those that are specific. A kshatriya who observes specific rules always obtains great prosperity. Good fortune is certain for those who adorn themselves with flowers and we have therefore worn them. A kshatriya's valour is in his arms, his valour is not in the power of speech. O son of Brihadratha! It has thus been said that his speech is never bold. O king! Brahma has placed his own energy in the arms of kshatriyas. If you wish to witness it, there is no doubt that you will witness it today. The wise always enter the house of a well-wisher through a gate, but use that which is not a gate for the house of

an enemy. That is the reason we have avoided your gate. Know that whenever we enter the house of an enemy to accomplish an objective, we never accept his homage. That is our eternal vow."'

245(20)

'Jarasandha said, "I do not recall that I have ever exhibited any enmity towards you. After reflection, I cannot see any evil act I have done towards you. O brahmanas! If I have never done an evil act and am innocent, why do you regard me as an enemy? Tell me honestly, because that is the principle followed by the truthful. There is no doubt that if injury is done to an innocent man, there is a violation of dharma and one's mind suffers, even if one is a kshatriya. A man may be knowledgeable in the ways of dharma and may be great in the rigid observance of vows, but if he acts perversely and wickedly, he hurts his own welfare. You know that in the three worlds, I am supreme among righteous ones in the practice of the dharma of kshatriyas. I never hurt my subjects. Therefore, you speak in delusion."

'Vasudeva replied, "O great king! There is someone from a lineage who has to undertake the tasks that lineage requires. The three of us have acted against you at his request. O king! The kshatriyas who live in this world have been abducted by you. Having committed this cruel act, how can you think of yourself as innocent? O supreme among kings! How can a king do violence to honest kings? Having oppressed the kings, you wish to sacrifice them to Rudra. O Brihadratha's son! This act of yours may touch us too. We follow dharma and are capable of protecting dharma. Human sacrifices have never been seen. Why do you wish to sacrifice humans to the god Shankara? You are of the same varna. Yet, you are treating those of the same varna as animals. O Jarasandha! Is there any other mind that is as perverted as yours? We help all those who are distressed. For the protection of our kin, we have come here to counter you, the one who is acting so as to destroy our kin. O king! If you think that there is no man among the kshatriyas of this world who can do this, your mind is greatly deluded. O king! Which kshatriya who knows the nature of his own noble birth will not wish to attain unparalleled heaven by falling in the field of battle? O ruler of Magadha! With their minds on heaven, know that kshatriyas of the world are consecrated in the sacrifice of battles and worship them. O king! Victory is the womb of heaven. Great fame is the womb of heaven. Austerities are the womb of heaven and so is the straight route of battle. These are the qualities of the ever-victorious Indra. It is by being focussed on this that Shatakratu defeated the demons and is the protector of the world. What can be a better road to heaven than a battle with someone like you, since you are proud of the strength of your extensive Magadha army? O king! Do not deprecate others. Valour exists in every man. O lord of men! You are superior only if you don't know of valour equal to yours and as long as glory equal to yours is not known. O king!

Listen to me when I say we are capable of equalling it. O Magadha! Conquer your ego and pride when you are in the presence of your equals. Do not go to Yama's abode with your sons, your ministers and your armies. Dambhodbhava, Kartyavirya, Uttara and Brihadratha—these kings and their forces were destroyed here, because they ignored their superiors. We who wish to liberate the captive kings are not self-proclaimed brahmanas. I am Shouri Hrishikesha[29] and these two brave men are the two Pandavas. O king! O Magadha! Stand firm. We are challenging you. Either liberate all the kings or go to Yama's abode."

'Jarasandha said, "I never take a king until I have vanquished him. Who is here who has not been vanquished? Whom have I not conquered? O Krishna! It has been said that the livelihood and dharma of kshatriyas is to bring others under his sway through valour and then do as he pleases. O Krishna! These kings have been collected for a divine purpose. Remembering the duty of kshatriyas, how can I free them today out of fear? I am prepared to fight—army against army, one against one, or one against two or three, all at the same time, or separately."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the king gave orders that Sahadeva should be instated[30] and readied himself to do battle with those whose deeds were terrible. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! When the time for battle approached, the king remembered his generals Koushika and Chitrasena, whose names in this world had been Hamsa and Dibhaka. These were names that had earlier been renowned and worshipped by all the people in the world of men. O king! O tiger among men! And the lord Shouri, supreme among strong ones, with a valour equal to that of tigers, also remembered. This did the truthful Achyuta remember. It had been destined that Jarasandha would be killed by the valorous Bhima. Madhusudana, the younger brother of Haladhara, foremost among those who have controlled themselves, wished to show respect to Brahma and did not wish to kill him himself.'

246(21)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Adhokshaja,[31] descendant of the Yadu lineage and eloquent in speech, spoke to King Jarasandha, who had resolved to do battle. "O king! With which one of us three have you made up your mind to fight? Who among us should be ready for the battle?" O king! Having been thus addressed by Krishna, the immensely radiant Magadha Jarasandha decided to do battle with Bhimasena. The priest brought chief herbs for alleviating pain and restoring consciousness to Jarasandha, who was impatient for the fight. A famous and learned brahmana performed the benedictions. In accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas, Jarasandha dressed himself appropriately. He removed his crown and tied up his hair. Jarasandha arose like an ocean that bursts through the shoreline. The intelligent king spoke to Bhima, whose valour was terrible. "O Bhima! I will fight with you. It is better to be vanquished by a superior one." Having

said this, the immensely energetic Jarasandha, conqueror of enemies, rushed at Bhimasena, like the demon Bali once rushed at Shakra.

'After consultations with Krishna, the powerful Bhimasena had also had benedictions performed and, eager to fight, advanced towards Jarasandha. Those two supreme warriors, tigers among men and armed only with their bare arms, engaged each other, extremely eager and each desiring to defeat the other. The sounds of grasping, holding and releasing of the arms then resounded with a terrible roar, like the roar of thunderbolts striking mountains. Both of them were the strongest among those who were strong and were supreme in their eagerness. Desiring victory, each sought to exploit weaknesses in the other. O king! This duel between the powerful ones was like that between Vasava and Vritra and the terrible duel sometimes drove away the crowds that were near.[32] They pulled each other forward and broke away from each other's holds. They threw the other one down and to the sides, dragging and grabbing the thighs. They insulted each other in loud words. They struck each other with rock-like blows. With broad shoulders and long arms, the two skilled fighters rained blows on each other with arms that were like iron clubs.

'The duel started on the first day of the month of Kartika. Ceaselessly, it went on day and night. The great-souled fighters were still engaged on the thirteenth day. But on the night of the fourteenth day, the Magadha withdrew, as he was exhausted. O king! On seeing that the king was tired, Janardana spoke, as if to Bhima of the terrible deeds.[33] "O Kounteya![34] One should not press down on an enemy who is weakened in battle. If pressed down at such a time, he might completely give up his soul. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should not press down upon the king. O bull among the Bharatas! Fight him with your arms, so that he can be an equal." From these words of Krishna, the Pandava,[35] the destroyer of enemy warriors, got to know Jarasandha's weakness and determined to kill him. Vrikodara, descendant of the Kuru lineage and chief among those who are strong, then seized the unvanquished Jarasandha, with the intention of vanquishing him.'

247(22)

Vaishampayana said, 'With his mind firmly set on the desire of killing Jarasandha, Bhimasena then spoke to Krishna of the Yadava lineage, "O Krishna! O tiger among the Yadu lineage! Now that I have girded up my loincloth, this evil one shouldn't be spared by me of his life." Having been thus addressed, Krishna, tiger among men, then replied to Vrikodara, so as to rush him, because he wanted to see Jarasandha dead, "O Bhima! Then quickly show us the spirit that you have got from the gods and the power you have got from the wind.[36] Show it on Jarasandha." At these words, the immensely strong Bhima, the destroyer of enemies, lifted up the powerful Jarasandha. O bull among the

Bharata lineage! O king! He whirled him around one hundred times. Then throwing him down on his knee, he broke his back into two. Trampling him down, he roared out aloud. When Jarasandha was thus pressed down and the Pandava roared, there was such a loud roar that all beings were terrified. All those from Magadha were benumbed and expectant women aborted, on hearing Bhimasena and Jarasandha's roars. Has the Himalaya Mountain, or the earth, been torn apart? On hearing Bhimasena's roars, this is what the residents of Magadha thought. At night, the destroyers of enemies left the king's dead body at the gate of the palace, as if he was asleep, and left.

'Krishna had Jarasandha's chariot, with pennants, yoked. He asked the two brothers to ascend it and set his relatives[37] free. Having been freed from their great fear, the kings and lords of the earth presented many gems to Krishna, worthy of bearing gems. Unhurt, armed with weapons and vanquishing his enemy, he[38] mounted the divine chariot and left Girivraja with the kings. With the two brothers as warriors[39] and with Krishna as the charioteer, the chariot was incapable of being conquered by all the kings and seemed to be always killing. With the two warriors Bhima and Arjuna riding in it and with Krishna as the charioteer, the beautiful chariot was radiant and invincible to all archers. It was on this chariot that Shakra and Vishnu had fought in the battle that Taraka[40] had caused. It was this chariot that Krishna ascended and left. It glittered like molten gold and was garlanded with nets of small bells. It thundered like rain-bearing clouds. It was always victorious in battle and it always killed its enemies. It was on this chariot that Shakra had killed ninety-nine demons. Having obtained this chariot, those bulls among men rejoiced.

'Then, on seeing the mighty-armed Krishna and his two brothers on the chariots, the citizens of Magadha were amazed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Divine horses, with the speed of the wind, were yoked to the chariot. When Krishna ascended it, it looked extremely beautiful. On that supreme chariot there was a flagstaff that did not seem to be attached to it at all. It was divine in origin, beautiful and with radiance that was like that of Indra's weapons. It could be seen from a distance of one yojana. Krishna thought of Garuda and he immediately arrived, the instant he had been thought of, like the tall pillar of a temple.[41] Garuda, eater of serpents, then sat on that supreme chariot on the flagstaff, together with many other blazing beings that had their mouths open and roared loudly. Incapable of being seen by those beings, his blazing energy was like the midday sun with its one thousand rays. O king! That beautiful flagstaff never knocked against a tree. It was never injured by weapons. Though it was visible to gods and men, it was divine in origin. Achyuta, tiger among men, left on that divine chariot with the two Pandavas, with the sound like that of thunder. King Vasu had obtained it from Vasava and Brihadratha from Vasu. In due course, it had passed from Brihadratha to the king who was Brihadratha's son. The mighty-armed and immensely illustrious

Pundarikaksha came out from Girivraja and stopped on the level ground outside.

'O king! All the citizens, with the brahmanas in the forefront, approached him there to show homage, in accordance with the prescribed rites. The kings who had been liberated from their bondage, worshipped Madhusudana with words of praise. "O mighty-armed! O son of Devaki! Aided by the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, it is not surprising that the protection of dharma should be vested in you. Today, you have accomplished the task of rescuing kings who had been miserably immersed in Jarasandha's terrible mire of a lake. O Vishnu! O supreme among men! We languished in that terrible mountain fortress. It is our destiny that we have been freed and you have obtained blazing fame. O tiger among men! O bull among men! Please tell us what we should do. However difficult may be the task, know that the kings will accomplish it." Reassuring them, the great-minded Hrishikesha said, "Yudhishthira wishes to perform the rajasuya. He who lives by dharma wishes to become a sovereign emperor. All of you must aid him in the sacrifice." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then all those kings gave their words with happy hearts. The lords of the earth then made Dasharha[42] share in their riches. Though disinclined, Govinda accepted, out of affection towards them.

'The maharatha Sahadeva, Jarasandha's son, came out with his relatives and his advisers, with the priest at the forefront. Sahadeva bowed down low before Vasudeva, god among men, and bowed down in homage, with presents of many gems. Krishna provided assurances to the frightened one. Then and there, he instated Jarasandha's son.[43] Having been allied with Krishna and having obtained homage from the two Parthas,[44] the intelligent king again entered Brihadratha's city. The lotus-eyed Krishna, resplendent with supreme radiance and laden with many riches, left with the two Parthas.

'Achuyta and the two Pandavas went to Indraprastha. On meeting Dharmaraja, he happily said, "O supreme among kings! Through good fortune, Bhima has killed the mighty Jarasandha. The kings who were imprisoned have been set free. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through good fortune, the skilled Bhimasena and Dhananjaya are well. They have returned unharmed to their own city." Then Yudhishthira worshipped Krishna, as he deserved. He embraced Bhima and Arjuna in delight. Having eliminated Jarasandha and obtained victory through his brothers, Ajatashatru enjoyed himself with his brothers. The Pandava[45] and his brothers then went to the freed kings[46] and in accordance with age, showed them homage and paid their respects. They then gave them leave to depart. Having been thus instructed by Yudhishthira, the kings swiftly left for their own respective kingdoms on their different mounts, happy in their hearts. Thus did the immensely intelligent Janardana, tiger among men, get his enemy Jarasandha killed through the Pandavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having ensured Jarasandha's killing through his intelligence, that conqueror of enemies[47] then took

leave from Dharmaraja, Pritha and Krishna[48] and from Subhadra, Bhimasena, Phalguna[49] and the twins. Having taken leave of Dhoumya, he prepared to leave for his own city in that chief divine chariot, radiant as the bright morning sun. It had been given to him by Dharmaraja and it thundered over the directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Led by Yudhishthira, the Pandavas circumambulated Krishna, whose deeds never decay. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the illustrious Krishna, Devaki's son, departed, the Pandavas obtained great glory. They had won a great victory and had provided security to the kings. This deed added to that. O king! They themselves found great joy in Droupadi. The king[50] was then famous for the protection of his kingdom and in accordance with dharma, did whatever was consistent with dharma, kama and artha.'

Section Twenty-Three

Digvijaya Parva

This section has 191 shlokas and seven chapters.

Chapter 248(23): 26 shlokas
Chapter 249(24): 27 shlokas
Chapter 250(25): 20 shlokas
Chapter 251(26): 16 shlokas
Chapter 252(27): 28 shlokas
Chapter 253(28): 55 shlokas
Chapter 254(29): 19 shlokas

The word digvijaya *means the conquest of the directions, that is, the conquest of the world. This section is therefore about the conquest undertaken by the Pandavas.*

248(23)

Vaishampayana said, 'Partha had obtained the supreme bow, the two inexhaustible quivers, the chariot, the flag and the sabha. He told Yudhishthira, "O king! I have the bow, weapons, arrows, valour, allies, land, fame and strength and whatever men desire and find difficult to obtain. O supreme among kings! I think we should act so as to extend our treasury. I wish to make other kings pay us tribute. On an auspicious day, moment and nakshatra, I will set out to conquer the region protected by Dhanada."[1] On hearing Dhananjaya, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira replied in words that were soft and grave. "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Go, but only after brahmanas have uttered benedictions on you, so that our well-wishers may be delighted and our enemies immersed in grief. O Partha! Your victory is certain. Your desires will undoubtedly be fulfilled." Having heard this, Partha set out with a large army. He set out on the divine chariot, performer of extraordinary deeds, given by Agni. In similar fashion, Bhimasena and the twins, bulls among men, also worshipped Dharmaraja and set out with their armies. The son of the one who vanquished Paka[2] conquered all the regions protected by the lord of wealth—Bhimasena the east, Sahadeva the south and Nakula, skilled in the use of all weapons, conquered the west. O king! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira remained in Khandavaprastha.'

Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! Please tell me in great detail the directions of their conquests, because I never tire of hearing about the great characters of my ancestors.'

Vaishampayana said, 'The sons of Pritha conquered the earth at the same time. I will first tell you about Dhananjaya's conquest. With great force, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya first conquered the kings of the land of Kuninda.[3] After conquering the

Anartas,[4] Kalakutas and Kunindas, he placed Sumandala, the conqueror of evil, in charge of the rear of his army. O king! Together with him, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, vanquished the land of Shakala[5] and King Prativindhya, the king of Shakala. Shakala was one of the seven regions[6] and there was a tumultuous battle between Arjuna and the armies of the kings of Shakala.[7] O bull among the Bharata lineage! After defeating all of them, the mighty archer attacked Pragjyotisha.[8] O lord of the earth! There was a mighty king named Bhagadatta there and the great-souled Pandava fought a great battle with him. Pragjyotisha was surrounded by kiratas, *chinas*[9] and many other warriors who lived along the shores of the ocean.[10] Having continuously fought with Dhananjaya for eight days and finding him to be still untiring on the field of battle, the king smilingly said, "O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O son of the chastiser of Paka! This blazing valour in battle is appropriate for you. O son![11] I am a friend of Indra of the gods and can withstand Shakra in battle. But I cannot withstand you in battle. O Pandava! What is it that you want? What can I do for you? O mighty-armed one! O son! Tell me. I will do what you wish." Arjuna replied, "King Yudhishthira, the son of dharma, is a bull among the Kurus. I wish that he may become the sovereign and others pay him tribute. You are my father's friend and have been affectionate towards me too. Therefore, I cannot command you. Please pay it[12] happily." Bhagadatta said, "O son of Kunti! You are to me the way King Yudhishthira is. I will do all that. What else can I do for you?"'

249(24)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus conquered him, Kunti's son, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya then went towards the north, protected by the lord of riches.[13] Kounteya, bull among men, conquered the inner mountains, the outer mountains and the upper mountains. Having conquered all the mountains and all the kings who lived there, he brought them under his sway and extracted riches from all of them. O king! Having won the riches and the loyalty of those kings, he marched with them against Brihanta, who lived in Kuluta. The earth trembled with the sound of his supreme drums, the clatter of the edges of his chariot wheels and the roar of his elephants.

'The young Brihanta came out from his city with a fourfold army to do battle with Pandava. The battle between Brihanta and Dhananjaya was a great one. But Brihanta was unable to withstand Pandava's valour. Realizing that Kounteya could not be beaten down, the lord of the mountains,[14] whose intelligence was limited,[15] brought him all his riches. O king! Having established the kingdom, he set out with Kuluta[16] and swiftly threw Senabindu out of his kingdom. He then subjugated Modapura, Vamadeva,

Sudamana, Susamkula and the northern Kulutas and their kings. O king! Having brought those men under Dharmaraja's rule, Dhananjaya then conquered five countries. On arriving in Divahprastha, Senabindu's great capital, the lord[17] set up a base there, with his fourfold army. Surrounded by them, that bull among men marched against King Vishvagashva Pourava. O king! After conquering in battle the brave warriors from the mountains, he used his flag-bearing troops to subjugate the city protected by Pourava. After vanquishing Pourava, Pandava defeated the seven mountain-dwelling dacoit tribes known as Utsavasamketa.[18] Then that bull among kshatriyas defeated the valorous kshatriyas from Kashmir and Lohita, using ten encircling armies. O king! Kounteya then took on the Trigartas, the Darvas, the Kokanadas and many other kshatriyas who attacked him collectively. The descendant of the Kuru lineage then conquered the charming city of Abhisari and defeated in battle Rochamana, who lived in Urasha. The son of the chastiser of Paka then conquered beautiful Simhapure, protected by Chitrayudhasura. Then, Kiriti,[19] bull among the Pandavas and descendant of the Kuru lineage, conquered the Suhmas[20] and the Cholas[21] with his entire army. The descendant of the Kuru lineage then conquered Bahlika[22] with supreme valour. They were difficult to defeat, so there was a great battle. Phalgu[23] Pandava, son of the chastiser of Paka, then took a select force and defeated the Daradas and the Kambojas.[24] The lord then defeated the bandits who live towards the north-east and those who live in the forests. Thereafter, the son of the chastiser of Paka subjugated the Lohas, the superior Kambojas and the northern Rishikas. The battle in Rishika, between the superior Rishikas and Partha was a fearful one, like the battle known as *tarakamaya*.[25] O king! After defeating the Rishikas in the field of battle, he extracted eight horses that had the colour of a parrot's breast. There were some others that had the colours of peacocks and still others that had both colours. Having thus conquered in battle the Himalaya and Nishkuta Mountains, the bull among men arrived at the white mountains and began to live there.'

250(25)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After having crossed the white mountains, the brave one arrived at the land where the Kimpurushas lived. They were protected by Drumaputra. There was a great battle in which many kshatriyas were slain. The best of the Pandavas won and extracted tribute. The son of the chastiser of Paka used his army and determination to conquer the region known as Hataka, protected by Guhyaka. Having won them over with conciliation, he set his eyes on the supreme Laka Manasa. He also saw all the places sacred to the rishis. On reaching Manasa, the lord Pandava conquered the regions around Hataka, protected by the

gandharvas. As tribute, he obtained from the city of the gandharvas supreme horses that were the colour of partridges and speckled, with eyes like those of frogs. Pandava, son of the chastiser of Paka, then arrived at the northern country of Harivarsha and wished to conquer it too.

'On seeing him, some doorkeepers appeared. They were giant in form, great in valour and immense in strength. They smilingly told him, "O Partha! You are incapable of conquering this city in any way. O Achyuta![26] If you desire your own welfare, turn back. You already have enough. Any human who enters this city must certainly die. O valorous one! We are pleased with you. Your conquests are already many. O Arjuna! Nothing can be seen here that is left for you to conquer. This is the land of the Northern Kurus and there cannot be any wars here. O Kounteya! Even if you enter, you will not be able to see anything. Nothing that is here can be seen with human eyes. O tiger among men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, if there is anything else that you wish, please tell us. We will do your bidding." Having been thus addressed, Arjuna, son of the chastiser of Paka said, "I wish that the intelligent Dharmaraja should become an emperor. I shall not enter this land if it is restricted to humans. But let something be given by you as tribute to Yudhishthira." Then they gave him divine garments, divine ornaments and divine hides and skins as tribute.

'Thus did that tiger among men conquer the northern regions. He fought many great battles, with kshatriyas, and also with bandits. Having conquered those kings, he extracted tribute from them and obtained a lot of riches and many jewels, together with horses that had the colour of partridges, were speckled, or had the colour of parrot feathers or those of peacocks. They were all as swift as the wind. O king! Surrounded by a gigantic fourfold army, the brave one returned again to the supreme city of Shakraprastha.'

251(26)

Vaishampayana said, 'At the same time, the valorous Bhimasena took his leave from Dharmaraja and left for the eastern direction. That tiger among the Bharata lineage had with him a great circle of forces, capable of oppressing the enemy's kingdom. He marched out to increase the enemy's sorrow. Pandava, tiger among kings, first went to the city of Panchala and used various means of conciliation to win the Panchalas over. Then that valorous one, bull among men, defeated the Gandakis and the Videhas[27] and after some time, went on to Dasharna.[28] There, King Sudharma of Dasharna performed a feat that makes one's hair stand up—he had a great duel with Bhima without any weapons.[29] On witnessing this deed, Bhimasena, the scorcher of enemies, made the immensely strong Sudharma the supreme general. O king! Bhima, terrible in valour, then marched towards the east and that large army seemed to make the earth tremble.

O king! That warrior, strongest among the strong, defeated in battle Rochamana, the lord of Ashvamedha, and his younger brother. Without exerting terrible force in vanquishing him, the immensely valorous Kounteya,[30] descendant of the Kuru lineage, then conquered the eastern regions. He then went south to the great city of the Pulindas and conquered Sukumara and Sumitra, the lord of men. O Janamejaya! Then, on Dharmaraja's command, that bull among the Bharata lineage advanced on the immensely brave Shishupala.

'Having heard of Pandava's[31] intention, the king of Chedi,[32] the scorcher of enemies, came out of his city and welcomed him. O great king! When the bulls among the Kuru and Chedi lineages met, they asked about the welfare of each other's lineages. O lord of the people! The king of Chedi then smilingly offered his kingdom and told Bhima, "O unblemished one! What do you wish to do?" Bhima then told him about Dharmaraja's wish and that lord of men acted accordingly.[33] O king! Bhima spent thirty nights there as Shishupala's guest. After that, he left with his army and his mounts.'

252(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then that destroyer of enemies vanquished Kumara Shrenimana and Brihadbala, the lord of Koshala. In Ayodhya, the best of the Pandavas defeated, without having to perform very terrible deeds, the righteous and extremely strong Dirghaprajna. The lord then subjugated the land of Gopalakaccha, the northern Sottamas and the king who was the lord of the Mallas. Along the slopes of the Himalayas, the powerful one then ran into Jaradgava and in a short while, brought the entire country under his power. The bull among men defeated many countries in this fashion and conquered Unnata and the mountains of Kukshimanta. Pandava, great in valour and supreme among those who are strong, defeated in battle Subandhu, the king of Kashi, one who never retreated from battle. The mighty-armed Bhima, terrible in deeds and bull among the Pandavas, used his power to conquer Kratha, lord of the kings in the region of Suparshva, in battle. Then he conquered the immensely energetic Matsyas, the immensely strong Malayas, the invincible Gayas and all the lands with animals everywhere.[34] The mighty-armed one repulsed Mardavika and Mahidhara and having marched towards the north, conquered the foothills. The strong Kounteya used his strength to defeat the land of the Vatsas, the lord of the Bhargas, the lord of the Nishadas and many other owners of the land, led by Manimana. Pandava Bhima then conquered the southern Mallas and Bhogavanta, without having to expend terrible effort. The lord, tiger among men, used conciliation, without the need for terrible deeds, to win over the Sharmakas and the Varmakasa and King Janaka of Videha, the lord of the earth. Spending time in Videha, Kounteya Pandava defeated the seven lords of the kiratas in the region around Mount Indra.

‘After that, the valorous Kounteya defeated the Suhmas and the eastern Suhmas in battle[35] and marched on towards Magadha. Defeating Danda and Dandadhara and many kings, he attacked Girivraja, with all of them on his side. O king! Having subjugated Jarasandha’s son and extracted tribute from him, the powerful one marched with all of them against Karna.[36] The earth trembled with his fourfold army. The best of the Pandavas fought with Karna, the destroyer of enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He vanquished Karna in battle and brought him under his sway. He then defeated the powerful kings who lived in the mountains. Later, in a great battle, using only the strength of his arms,[37] Pandava defeated the immensely strong Modagiri. O king! He then defeated the immensely strong and brave Vasudeva, the king of Poundra and the immensely energetic king who dwelt in the marshes along the Koushiki.[38] Both these warriors were terrible in valour and were surrounded by large armies. O great king! He then attacked the king of Vanga.[39] He vanquished Samudrasena and King Chandrasena, the king of Tamralipta[40] and Kacha, the ruler of Vanga. The bull among the Bharata lineage conquered the ruler of the Suhmas, all those who lived along the ocean and all the mlecchas.

‘Having thus conquered many countries and extracting riches from them, Pavana’s powerful son[41] then reached the Louhitya.[42] He extracted tributes and riches of all kinds from all the kings of the mlecchas who lived in islands in the ocean—sandalwood, aloe, garments, the best of gems and pearls, gold, silver, diamonds and priceless coral. They showered the Pandava,[43] whose spirit was boundless, with great riches that amounted to hundreds of millions.[44] Returning to Indraprastha, Bhima, terrible in valour, tendered all those riches to Dharmaraja.’

253(28)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In similar fashion, after worshipping Dharmaraja, Sahadeva left for the south with a large army. The lord first conquered the entire land of the Shurasenas.[45] The descendant of the Kuru lineage, supreme among powerful ones, then subjugated the king of Matsya.[46] In a great battle, he defeated Dantavakra, emperor among kings. Having forced him to pay tribute, he restored the throne to him. He then vanquished Sukumara and King Sumitra and conquered the other Matsyas and the Patachcharas. The illustrious one swiftly conquered the country of the nishadas and Goshringa, supreme among mountains. Then he defeated King Shrenimana. After conquering the new country, he marched against Kuntibhoja and he[47] happily accepted the suzerainty.[48] On the banks of the Charmanvati[49] he encountered King Jambaka’s son,[50] who had earlier been defeated by Vasudeva because of an earlier enmity. O

descendant of the Bharata lineage! He instantly engaged in a battle with Bhoja and having defeated him, marched towards the south.

'Having extracted tribute and many riches from them,[51] he took all these and advanced towards the Narmada. The powerful and valorous son of the Ashvins defeated in battle Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti,[52] who were surrounded by large armies. Having extracted riches from them, he advanced towards the city of Mahishmati.[53] The powerful Pandava Sahadeva, bull among men, engaged in battle King Nila there. The great battle struck terror in the hearts of the fearful. It destroyed armies and threatened life. The illustrious god of fire provided succour to his enemy. Horses, chariots, elephants, soldiers and armour from Sahadeva's army were seen to be blazing. The mind of the descendant of the Kuru lineage was bewildered. O Janamejaya! He was incapable of giving a fitting reply.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Why did the illustrious Agni become Sahadeva's adversary in war? O brahmana! He was seeking to accomplish a sacrifice.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'It is said that the illustrious god of fire lived in Mahishmati and was once caught in an act of adultery. In earlier times, after he had sported himself as he willed in the disguise of a brahmana, he was brought before King Nila.[54] The virtuous king ordered him to be punished in accordance with the sacred texts and the illustrious fire-god blazed up in anger. On seeing this, the king was surprised and bowed his head before the wise one.[55] At this, the illustrious fire-god bestowed his favours on the king. The one who achieves the end of all sacrifices offered a boon to the king and the lord of the earth asked for the boon that his forces might always be free from fear. O king! Ever since then, whenever ignorant kings have tried to conquer that city, they have been consumed instantly by the fire. O extender of the Kuru lineage! From that day, the women from the city of Mahishmati became unacceptable.[56] Because of Agni's boon, the women could no longer be restricted.[57] They are their own mistresses[58] and act as they will. O supreme among men! O great king! From that day, out of fear of Agni, all kings have avoided that kingdom.

'O king! The virtuous Sahadeva saw that his soldiers were engulfed in fear and surrounded by the fire, they trembled like a mountain. He touched water and made himself pure and then spoke to Pavaka.[59] "O Pavaka! O one with the black trails! I worship you and it is for your sake that I have undertaken this task. You are the mouth of the gods. You are the sacrifice. You purify and you are the purifier. You are the bearer of sacrificial offerings. It is from you that the Vedas have come into being and thus it is that you are known as Jataveda. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Please do not cause an obstruction to this sacrifice." Having uttered these words, Madri's son spread kusha grass on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In accordance with the prescribed rituals, that tiger among men sat down before the advancing fire, before all

his frightened and anxious troops. Like the great ocean which does not cross the shoreline, the fire did not cross him. The fire approached Sahadeva, god among men and descendant of the Kuru lineage, and spoke to him in affectionate words, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Arise. I acted thus only to test you. I know all your intentions and those of Dharma's son.[60] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! However, I am bound to protect this city, as long as there are heirs to carry forward King Nila's lineage. O Pandava! However, I will accomplish what you desire in your heart." Then Madri's son arose with a happy heart. Bowing his head and joining his hands in salutation, the bull among men worshipped Pavaka. When Pavaka retreated, King Nila arrived and welcomed Sahadava, tiger among men and lord of all warriors. He[61] accepted the homage and made him a tributary. Then Madri's victorious son advanced in a southern direction.

'He vanquished the immensely energetic Traipuras.[62] The mighty-armed one conquered the lord of Potana. With a great deal of effort, the mighty-armed one then subjugated Ahriti, king of Surashtra,[63] whose preceptor was Koushika. While in the region of Surashtra, the intelligent one sent an ambassador to King Rukmin Bhishmaka of Bhojakata, who had great standing, was devoted to dharma and was a friend of Indra himself. O king! For the sake of Vasudeva,[64] the mighty-armed king and his sons happily accepted the suzerainty.

'Taking a lot of riches, the lord of war went from there to Shurparaka and the region named Upakrita, ruled by a clan. The immensely energetic and immensely strong one conquered them and the region of Dandaka.[65] The immensely wise one conquered and brought under his sway the kings who are born from mleccha wombs and live in islands in the ocean, the man-eating nishadas, the Karnapravaranas, those known as the Kalamukhas and who are a cross between men and rakshasas, all of the Kolla mountains, Murachipattana, the island known as Tamra, Mount Ramaka and King Timingila. He used messengers to subjugate and obtain tribute from the forest-dwelling men who had only one leg[66] and the cities of Samjayanti, Picchanda and Karahataka. Likewise, he used messengers to subjugate and obtain tribute from the Pandya, the Dravidas, the Chodras,[67] the Keralas, the Andhras, the Talavanas, the Kalingas, the Ushtrakarnikas, the Antakhis,[68] the Romas[69] and the city of the Greeks.[70] O lord of kings! Madri's intelligent son then went to Bharukaccha.[71] He sent envoys to the great-souled Poulastya Vibhishana.[72] The conqueror of enemies and one with dharma in his heart[73] used conciliation and knowing this to be determined by destiny, the intelligent lord[74] happily accepted the suzerainty and sent many kinds of riches—firstly sandalwood and aloe, and then divine ornaments, expensive garments and priceless

jewels.

'Then the powerful and intelligent Sahadeva returned. He thus subjugated with conciliation and conquest. After making the kings pay tribute, the conqueror of enemies returned. O king! O Janamejaya! O bull among the Bharata lineage! He handed all of this over to Dharmaraja and having accomplished his task, lived happily there.'

254(29)

Vaishampayana said, 'I will now describe the deeds and conquests of Nakula and how that lord vanquished the region that had once been conquered by Vasudeva.[75] Taking a large army with him, the intelligent one left Khandavaprastha and headed towards the west. The earth trembled with the lion-like roars of his warriors and sounds made by the edges of his chariot wheels.

'He first marched on the prosperous and beautiful Rohitaka, beloved of Kartikeya. It was rich in cattle, horses, wealth and grain. There was a great battle there with the Mattamayuraka warriors. The immensely radiant one then conquered the desert region, the land known as Sairishaka that was rich in grain, Maheccha, the Shibis, the Trigartas, the Ambashthas, the Malavas, the five groups of Karpatas and the brahmanas known as Madhyamikaya and Vatadhana. Having circled again, that bull among men defeated the clans known as Utsavasamketa who dwelt in the forests of Pushkara, the immensely powerful Gramaneyas who lived on the banks of the Sindhu,[76] the clans of shudras and *abhiras*[77] who lived along the Sarasvati,[78] all those who live on fish and all those who live in the mountains, the land of the five rivers, the western Paryatas, the northern Jyotika, the city named Vrindataka and Dvarapala. The immensely radiant one defeated them all and the Harhunas and all the kings who dwelt to the west.

'Having brought all this under his rule, the Pandava[79] sent messengers to Vasudeva and he[80] and his ten kingdoms accepted his[81] rule. Then he marched to Shakala, the city of the Madras. Using conciliation, the powerful one made an ally of his maternal uncle Shalya.[82] O lord of the earth! The king honoured him, as was due to a deserving guest. The lord of warriors took a large quantity of riches and departed. He then defeated the extremely fearful mlecchas who lived along the sides of the ocean, the Pahlavas and the Barbaras.[83] Having conquered all these kings and extracted tribute, Nakula, supreme among men, returned. O great king! Such were the riches collected by the great-souled one that ten thousand camels carried it with difficulty. In Indraprastha, Madri's brave and fortunate son went to Yudhishthira and offered the riches to him. Thus did Nakula, bull among the Bharata lineage, conquer the western regions, protected by Varuna and conquered earlier by Vasudeva.'[84]

Section Twenty-Four

Rajasuya Parva

This section has ninety-seven shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 255(30): 54 shlokas
Chapter 256(31): 25 shlokas
Chapter 257(32): 18 shlokas

This section is about the rajasuya or royal sacrifice.

255(30)

Vaishampayana said, 'Protected by Dharmaraja and supported by truth, with all the enemies subjugated, the subjects were always engaged in their respective tasks. Because revenue was collected in the right way and rule was in accordance with the principles of dharma, the clouds poured forth the desired rain and the country was swollen in prosperity. Because of the king's deeds, everything prospered, especially the breeding of cattle, agriculture and trade. O king! Dacoits and thieves, and even the king's servants, were not heard to speak lies to each other. Yudhishthira was always devoted to dharma and during his reign, there never were droughts, too much of rain, disease, fires or loss in consciousness. Other kings only came to him for pleasant tasks, to show respect and offer tribute out of their own volition, and not for any other reason. The accumulation of riches acquired through dharma became so large that it would have been impossible to spend it in hundreds of years. Having ascertained the size of his granary and treasury, King Kounteya,[1] lord of the earth, mentally decided to perform the sacrifice.

'Separately and collectively, his well-wishers told him, "O lord! It is time for the sacrifice. Do what is necessary to perform it." While they were speaking in this way, Hari[2] arrived—the ancient rishi, the soul of the Vedas, visible only to those who know him, supreme among all established things, the origin and dissolution of the universe, the preserver of what was, is and will be, Keshava, the destroyer of Keshi,[3] the protecting wall of all the Vrishnis and the one who provides sanctuary in times of distress. Having placed Anakadundubhi in charge of his forces and taking a great deal of riches for Dharmaraja, Madhava, tiger among men, arrived with a large army. He entered that supreme city to the sound of chariots, his wealth adding to the inexhaustible ocean of riches that were already there. With Krishna's arrival, the city of the Bharatas rejoiced, like a place without a sun when the sun arrives, or a place without the wind when the wind arrives. Yudhishthira delightedly met him and offered him homage in accordance with the prescribed rites.

‘When they had asked about each other’s welfare and he[4] was happily seated, that bull among men[5] told Krishna, in the presence of Dhoumya and Dvaipayana at the forefront of the officiating priests, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins. “O Krishna! It is because of you that the entire earth is under my rule. O Varshneya! It is through your favours that I have obtained great riches. O Madhava! O son of Devaki! As is prescribed, I now wish to devote all this to the welfare of brahmanas and the sacrificial fire. O mighty-armed Dasharha![6] With my younger brothers as companions, please grant me permission for you to be instated in the sacrifice. O mighty-armed one! O Govinda! O Dasharha! When you have been instated in the sacrifice, I will become free from sin. O lord! O Krishna! Otherwise, grant me, and my younger brothers, permission to undertake this sacrifice. For, with your permission, I will be able to perform that supreme sacrifice.” After greatly praising his[7] many qualities, Krishna replied, “O tiger among kings! You are a universal emperor and can perform the great sacrifice. When you have performed the sacrifice and obtained its fruits, we will accomplish what we desire. Perform the sacrifice you wish. I am always established in your welfare. Appoint me in whatever office you want. I will act in accordance with all your words.” Yudhishthira said, “O Krishna! O Hrishikesha! When you are willingly present here, it is certain that my resolution will be achieved and my success is assured.” Having thus obtained Krishna’s permission, Pandava[8] and his brothers began to prepare the means for the rajasuya.

‘Pandava,[9] destroyer of his enemies, instructed Sahadeva, supreme among warriors, and all his advisers, “The brahmanas prescribe articles for this sacrificial ceremony. Let those be collected along with all the utensils and auspicious objects. Let the ingredients Dhoumya mentions be swiftly brought. In due order, as is required, let the men bring them. In their desire to do that which pleases me, let Indrasena,[10] Vishoka[11] and Arjuna’s charioteer Puru be employed to acquire the required food. O supreme among the Kuru lineage![12] Let every object of desire be brought, fragrant and succulent, so that the minds of brahmanas are delighted and pleased.” As soon as these words were uttered by the great-souled Dharmaraja, Sahadeva, supreme among warriors, announced that it had all been done.

‘O king! Dvaipayana then appointed the officiating priests.[13] They were immensely illustrious brahmanas, who seemed to be personifications of the Vedas themselves. Satyavati’s son[14] himself acted as the brahman. Susama, bull among the Dhananjayas, became the chanter of Sama.[15] Yajnavalka, supreme among those who are established in the brahman, became the chief adhvaryu. Vasu’s son Paila, aided by Dhoumya, became the hotar. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The groups of sons and disciples of these, all learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, became assistants to the hotars.

Having invoked the auspicious day and arranging everything according to the rites, they organized the great sacrifice for the gods, in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. Given specific instructions, artisans built large shelters that were filled with jewels and were like the mansions of the gods.

'Then that king, supreme among kings and supreme among the Kuru lineage,[16] instructed his adviser Sahadeva, "Quickly send swift messengers with invitations." Hearing the king's words, he[17] immediately sent messengers. "Invite to the kingdom all the brahmanas and all the owners of land, all the vaishyas and all the respected shudras. Bring them all here." On the Pandava's instructions, invitations were sent to all the lords of the earth and more messengers were sent with invitations.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the time was right, the brahmanas instated Kunti's son Yudhishthira in the rajasuya. O Indra among men! When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, always devoted to dharma, was instated, he went to the sacrificial ground, surrounded by thousands of brahmanas, his brothers, his relatives, his well-wishers, his advisers and kshatriyas who had arrived from many countries. Accompanied by his ministers, that best of kings was like dharma personified. Brahmanas arrived from different directions. They were learned in all the branches of knowledge, the Vedas and the Vedangas. On Dharmaraja's instructions, thousands of artisans constructed separate dwelling places for them and their companions. These had all the qualities and were stocked with food and garments. O king! Shown due favours, the brahmanas lived there, recounting many tales and watching the actors and dancers. A great and unending sound was heard as those great-souled brahmanas cheerfully ate and spoke. "Give, give!" "Eat, eat!" Such were the sounds that were always heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja separately gave hundreds and thousands of cattle, beds, gold and women. Thus did the sacrifice of the great-souled Pandava begin, the unmatched warrior on earth, as Shakra is in the world of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then King Yudhishthira sent Pandava Nakula to Hastinapura, to bring Bhishma, Drona, Dhritarashtra, Vidura, Kripa and all the brothers who were attached to Yudhishthira.'

256(31)

Vaishampayana said, 'The victorious Nakula went to Hastinapura and the Pandava[18] invited Bhishma and Dhritarashtra. Having heard of Dharmaraja's sacrifice and learned about sacrifices, they happily set out, with the brahmanas at the forefront. O bull among men! Others also came in hundreds, content in their hearts and desiring to see Pandava Dharmaraja's sabha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the kings arrived from all the directions. They brought with them many expensive jewels.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them were welcomed with honour—Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, the greatly intelligent Vidura, all the brothers with Duryodhana

at the forefront, all the kings with the preceptor[19] at the forefront, Subala the king of Gandhara, the immensely strong Shakuni, Achala, Vrishaka, the supreme warrior Karna, Rita, Shalya the king of the Madras, the maharatha Bahlika, Somadatta of the Kuru lineage, Bhuri, Bhurishrava, Shala, Ashvatthama, Kripa, Drona,[20] Jayadratha the king of Sindhu, Yajnasena[21] and his son, Shalva the lord of the earth, the greatly famous Bhagadatta, king of Pragjyotisha, all the mlecchas who lived along the shores of the ocean, the kings from the mountains, King Brihadbala, Vasudeva from Pundra, the king of Vanga, the king of Kalinga, Akarsha, Kuntala, the Vanavasya, the Andhrakas, the Dravidas, the Simhalas, the king of Kashmir, the immensely energetic Kuntibhoja, the immensely strong Suhma, all the other kings and warriors from Bahlika, Virata and his sons, the maharatha Machella, kings, the sons of kings, the lords of many countries, the immensely valorous Shishupala, invincible in battle, and his son, Rama,[22] Aniruddha, Babhru, Sarana, Gada, Pradyumna, Samba, the valorous Charudeshna, Ulmuka, Nishatha, Pradyumna's valorous son and all the other Vrishnis who were maharathas. They all went to the Pandava's sacrifice. Many other kings from the middle regions also went to the great rajasuya sacrifice of Pandu's son.

'O king! On Dharmaraja's instructions, dwelling houses were provided to all of them. They had many rooms and were adorned with lakes and trees. There, Dharma's son showed them the best of honours. Having been shown due homage, all the kings went to their assigned dwelling houses—as tall as the peaks of Kailasa, beautiful, stocked with every kind of object and surrounded by strongly built and white walls on every side. There were nets of gold and the floors were paved with precious stones. The stairs were gentle to climb and there were expensive seats and carpets. They were decorated with wreaths and garlands and perfumed with the best of aloe. They were white like a swan's feathers and could be seen from the distance of a yojana. The doors were wide, permitting easy entry and were characterized by every quality. They were constructed out of many metals and looked like the peaks of the Himalayas.

'After resting there for some time, those lords saw Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, surrounded by many *sadasyas*[23] and donating innumerable gifts. O king! Crowded by sadasyas, kings and great-souled brahmanas, the place looked as beautiful as the vault of the sky,[24] crowded with immortals.'

257(32)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having shown homage to his grandfather[25] and preceptor[26] and having welcomed them, Yudhishthira spoke these words to Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son[27] and Vivimshati.[28] "All of you must show me every favour at this sacrifice. All my great riches here are yours. Be kind towards me, without any

constraints, and as you desire." The eldest of the Pandavas had already been instated in the sacrifice. Having thus spoken, he immediately appointed each with a suitable office in the sacrifice. Duhshasana was put in charge of food and other objects of pleasure. Ashvatthama was appointed to the task of tending to the brahmanas. Sanjaya was appointed to the task of welcoming the kings. The immensely wise Bhishma and Drona were in charge of what should be done and what should not be done. The king gave Kripa the task of looking after the gold, gold coins and jewels and also the distribution of dakshina. Similarly, he appointed other tigers among men to other tasks.

'Having been brought there by Nakula, the guests Bahlika, Dhritarashtra, Somadatta and Jayadratha enjoyed themselves, as if they were the masters. Kshatta[29] Vidura, knowledgeable in every aspect of dharma, was in charge of the treasury. Duryodhana received all the tribute that was brought. All the worlds assembled there, wishing to see Dharmaraja Pandava's sabha and participate in the supreme fruits. No one came there with a tribute that was less than one thousand.[30] Everyone made Dharmaraja prosper with many jewels. The kings rivalled each other and, donating riches, proudly said, "Let the Kouravya attain the sacrifice with my riches alone." O king! The sacrificial grounds of the great-souled Kounteya were resplendent with dwelling houses which had chariots in front, guards, soldiers, chariots of the lords of the earth,[31] brahmana dwelling houses, mansions constructed like divine chariots and decorated with many colourful jewels, the assembled kings, wealth and prosperity. Yudhishthira seemed to rival the god Varuna in riches. The sacrifice had six fires and large amounts of dakshina. Everyone was satisfied with every object of desire—abundance of grain and plenty of food. It was crowded by well-fed people. A large amount of gifts of jewels were brought to the assembly. Those skilled in the knowledge of mantras offered libations, clarified butter and oblations at the sacrifice and gratified the gods and the maharshis. Like the gods, the brahmanas were also gratified with gifts, food and great wealth. All the varnas were delighted at the sacrifice.'

Section Twenty-Five

Arghabhiharana Parva

This section has ninety-nine shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 258(33): 32 shlokas
Chapter 259(34): 23 shlokas
Chapter 260(35): 29 shlokas
Chapter 261(36): 15 shlokas

Argha *(or arghya) is an offering made as a sign of veneration.* Abhiharana *is the act of fetching or taking. So* arghabhiharana parva *is about the offering of a gift, as a sign of respect, and the consequent dispute.*

258(33)

Vaishampayana said, 'At the time of the sprinkling of water,[1] all the brahmanas and kings entered the inside of the sacrificial enclosure. The maharshis, with the great-souled Narada at the forefront, seated themselves at the altar. With the rajarshis, they were as radiant as the gods and the devarshis in Brahma's abode. Those immensely energetic ones performed one rite after another and discussed it among themselves, "This is the right way," "that is not the right way," "there is no other way except this," thus did they speak a lot and argue with each other. Some made weak arguments appear strong. Others cited the sacred texts to make strong arguments appear weak. Some intelligent debaters tore apart the arguments of others, the way hawks fall upon raw pieces of meat thrown in the air. Some among them were great in their vows and knew the stories about dharma and artha. Others were supreme among those who had knowledge of the Vedas. Others found delight in recounting tales. The sacrificial altar was surrounded by gods, brahmanas and maharshis, all with knowledge of the Vedas, and looked as beautiful as the clear sky with its stars. O king! No shudra, or one without any vows, was near the inner altar of Yudhishthira's abode.

'On seeing the prosperity of the prosperous and intelligent Dharmaraja, all the consequences of that sacrifice, Narada became satisfied. O lord of men! On seeing the assembly of all the kshatriyas, the sage Narada began to think. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He remembered the ancient account about the partial incarnations that he had heard in Brahma's abode. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Knowing that this was an assembly of gods, Narada remembered Pundarikaksha Hari.[2] The lord Narayana, slayer of enemies of the wise ones[3] and destroyer of cities of the enemies, had himself been born as a kshatriya to keep his pledge. In ancient times, the creator of beings had himself commanded the gods, "You will regain your own worlds after you

have killed one another." Having thus instructed all the gods, Shambhu[4] Narayana, the illustrious lord of the universe, was himself born in Yadu's dynasty. Having been born in the lineage of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis, the supreme one among those who extend lineages, shone with supreme prosperity, like the moon among the stars. Hari's strength of arms was worshipped by Indra, with all the gods. He is the destroyer of enemies and had been born in human form. "Oh! What can be a greater wonder than this? The self-creator will himself take away all these great and strong kshatriyas." These were the thoughts of the righteous Narada. He knew that Hari Narayana is the god who is worshipped through sacrifices. The intelligent one, supreme among those who know dharma, remained at the great sacrifice of the supremely intelligent Dharmaraja, so as to greatly honour him.

'O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhishma then spoke to King Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. "Let offerings be made to the kings, according to what they deserve. O Yudhishthira! It is said that one's preceptor, one's priest, one's relative, a snataka, a friend and a king—these are the six who are deserving of such offerings. It is also said that when someone comes and stays for more than one year, he too becomes deserving. These kings have stayed with us for a very long time. O king! Therefore, let an arghya be brought for each of them. Let the first arghya be brought for he who is the most deserving among them." Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Whom do you consider to be the one to whom the first arghya should be presented? Please tell me what is right." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his intelligence, Shantanu's son Bhishma then determined that Varshneya Krishna was the most deserving person on earth. "Among all these assembled here, he is the one who blazes with his energy, strength and valour, like the sun shines among the stars. This sacrificial place is lit up and gladdened by Krishna, like a sunless place with the sun and a windless place with the wind." Having been thus instructed by Bhishma, the powerful Sahadeva offered the supreme arghya to Varshneya, in accordance with the rites prescribed. Krishna accepted it, in accordance with the rites laid down in the sacred texts. However, Shishupala could not tolerate this homage shown to Vasudeva. In that assembly, the immensely powerful king of Chedi censured Bhishma and Dharmaraja and then insulted Vasudeva.'

259(34)

'Shishupala said, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage![5] When so many great-souled lords of the earth are present here, Varshneya does not deserve to be worshipped, as if he were a king. O Pandava! This honour shown to Pundarikaksha is not deserving of the great-souled Pandavas. O Pandavas! You are children and do not know the subtleties of dharma. This son of the river[6] can see little and has transgressed what is proper. Though he knows what is dharma, Bhishma acts like you out of favouritism and is

worthy of censure in the world of honest ones. This man from Dasharha is not even a king. You have shown him homage. How does he deserve to be honoured foremost among all these kings? O bull among the Bharata lineage! You cannot consider Krishna to be the eldest when the aged Vasudeva[7] is here? How can the son he shown homage first? Or you may consider Vasudeva to be one who always does that which ensures your welfare. But then, when Drupada is here, how can Madhava be thus worshipped? O chief among those of the Kuru lineage! If you consider Krishna to be your preceptor, how can Varshneya be shown homage when Drona is here? O descendant of the Kuru lineage! If you consider Krishna to be the sacrificial priest, how can you show him homage when the brahmana Dvaipayana is present? O supreme among those of the Kuru lineage! Madhusudana is not a sacrificial priest, or a preceptor, or a king. Why have you shown him homage except out of favouritism? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you must worship Madhusudana, why did you bring these kings here, so as to insult them?

'"We did not offer tribute to the great-souled Kounteya out of fear, or out of avarice, or as a result of conciliation. We offered him tribute because he wished to become an emperor, in accordance with the dictates of dharma. Yet he now pays no attention to us. Krishna has not attained any signs of royalty, yet he is offered homage in the midst of this assembly of kings. This is nothing but an insult. The fame of Dharma's son, as someone who has dharma in his heart, has vanished. Who can offer deserving homage in this way to one who has deviated from dharma? Born in the lineage of the Vrishnis, he earlier slew a king.[8] Today, the devotion to dharma has deserted Yudhishthira. His meanness is evident from his offering the arghya to Krishna. O Madhava! If the Kounteyas are scared and if they have become mean as a consequence of their asceticism, surely you could have enlightened them about what kind of honour you deserve. O Janardana! If in their meanness they offered you a homage that you are not worthy of, why did you accept it? Though undeserving, you set great store on this homage, like a dog that has found an offering of sacrificial ghee and consumes it in private. O Janardana! This is not only an insult to the Indras among kings. The Kurus have also brought out your true nature. O Madhusudana! You are not a king and this royal homage to you is like a wife to the impotent or a beautiful sight to the blind. We have seen what King Yudhishthira is and we have seen what Bhishma is. We have seen what Vasudeva is. We have seen everything exactly as it is."

'With these words, Shishupala arose from his supreme seat and went out from the assembly, together with all the other kings.'[9]

260(35)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then King Yudhishthira rushed after Shishupala and spoke to him in these sweet and conciliatory words. "O lord of the earth! The words that you have

spoken are not appropriate. O king! They are in violation of dharma, they are cruel and serve no purpose. O lord of the earth! Shantanu's son Bhishma will never err in supreme dharma and do not insult him in vain. Look at these many lords of the earth, older than you. They accepted the homage shown to Krishna and you should also accept it. O lord of Chedi, Bhishma knows Krishna's true nature and you yourself do not know it as well as the Kouravya[10] does."

'Bhishma said, "Krishna is the oldest in the worlds. He who does not accept the homage shown to him, deserves neither kind words, nor conciliation. A kshatriya who is supreme among warriors and having defeated a kshatriya in battle, sets him free from captivity, becomes his preceptor. In this assembly of kings, I do not see a lord of the earth who has not been defeated in battle through Satvata's[11] energy. Not only is Achyuta supremely deserving of this homage, he deserves to be worshipped by all the three worlds. Many bulls among kshatriyas have been defeated by Krishna in battle. The entire universe and everything are established in Varshneya. Therefore, though there are elders here, we show homage to Krishna and no one else. You should not speak as you did. Your thoughts should not be of that kind. O king! I have attended upon many who are old in knowledge. When they recounted in their assemblies the qualities of Shouri, blessed with all the qualities, I have heard of those many qualities that are greatly revered by the honest. Many are the times when I have heard people talk about the deeds that this intelligent one has performed since birth. O king of Chedi! We have not worshipped Janardana out of caprice. Nor have we shown him homage because of our special relationship with him or because we expect anything from him. He is the source of all happiness on earth, all the honest of the earth honour him. We offered him the homage because we knew of his fame, valour and victories. There is no one here, however young, who has not been examined. Passing over many who possess qualities and age, we chose Hari as the most deserving of honour. He is the oldest among brahmanas in knowledge and among kshatriyas, he is the greatest in strength. Both these are firm grounds for Govinda to be worshipped. He is learned in the Vedas and Vedangas and has infinite strength. Is there anyone else in the world of men who is as distinguished as Keshava? In Achyuta can always be found generosity, dexterity, learning, valour, modesty, deeds, supreme intelligence, humility, beauty, steadfastness, satisfaction and prosperity. Therefore, he has every quality. He is the teacher, father and preceptor. He is fit to be honoured and worthy of worship. Hrishikesha is the officiating priest, the preceptor, the bridegroom,[12] the snataka, the king and the friend. Therefore, Achyuta has been shown the homage. The worlds owe their origin to Krishna and in him are they dissolved. It is in Krishna that all the beings of this universe are established. He is passive nature, he is the active doer and he is eternal. He is supreme among all beings and it is for this reason that Achyuta is the eldest. Intelligence, mind,

greatness, wind, energy, water, sky, earth and the four kinds of beings[13]—are all established in Krishna. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the directions and the intermediate directions—are all established in Krishna. Since he does not know that Krishna is always everywhere, this Shishupala is only a child[14] and utters these words. It is only the intelligent man who can see the best of dharma and can act according to dharma, not this king of Chedi. Who among these great-souled lords of the earth, young or old, does not consider Krishna to be worthy of worship? Who does not show him homage? If Shishupala considers that this homage was undeserving, let him act as he sees fit, for this undeserving honour."'

261(36)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the immensely famous Bhishma became quiet. Then Sahadeva uttered these words of great import. "If there are any kings here who cannot tolerate the homage I have shown to Keshava Krishna, of immeasurable valour and the slayer of Keshi,[15] I place my foot on the heads of those strong ones. As I utter these words, let him give a fitting reply. Let the intelligent kings accept that he is the teacher, the father and the preceptor, one who is shown homage, who should be shown homage and who is deserving of homage." When he displayed his foot, not one among those intelligent, wise, proud and powerful kings replied. At that, a shower of flowers rained down on Sahadeva's head. An invisible voice exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent!" Attired in black antelope skin, Narada, the foreteller of both the past and the future, the dispeller of all doubts and the knower of all the worlds, approved.

'All the masses[16] who had been invited there, with Sunitha[17] at the forefront, seemed to be angry and their faces paled. The kings spoke of Yudhishthira's instatement and the homage offered to Vasudeva. They were disgusted and decided they had deserved it. Though they were restrained by well-wishers, their forms were angry and they looked like roaring lions that were dragged away from raw meat. Krishna understood that this ocean of kings, surrounded by waves of soldiers, was getting ready to do battle. Sahadeva, god among men, completed the ceremony, worshipping especially the brahmanas and the kshatriyas who deserved such homage. When Krishna had been shown homage, Sunitha, the one who dragged his enemies, spoke to the lords of men. He was angry and his eyes were extremely copper-red. "Do you think that I am still the general of your army? Do we stand here ready to fight the assembled Vrishnis and Pandavas?" When he had thus inspired all the kings, the bull among the Chedis consulted with the kings about disrupting the sacrifice.'

Section Twenty-Six

Shishupala-vadha Parva

This section has 191 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 262(37): 15 shlokas
Chapter 263(38): 40 shlokas
Chapter 264(39): 20 shlokas
Chapter 265(40): 23 shlokas
Chapter 266(41): 33 shlokas
Chapter 267(42): 60 shlokas

Since vadha means killing this section is about the killing of Shishupala.

262(37)

Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing that ocean of kings angrily agitated like the sea, Yudhisthira spoke to the old Bhishma, best among those who are intelligent and the grandfather of the Kurus. It was like the greatly energetic Puruhuta[1] speaking to Brihaspati. "This great ocean of kings is agitated with anger. O grandfather! Tell me what I should do now. O grandfather! Tell me now, in detail and completely, what I must do to prevent an obstruction to the sacrifice, so that the welfare of the subjects is ensured." When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, knowledgeable in dharma, uttered these words, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, thus spoke to him, "O tiger among the Kuru lineage! Do not be frightened. Can a dog kill a lion? I have already chosen a path that is auspicious and in conformity with good policy. All these rulers of the earth bark like a pack of dogs around a sleeping lion. O son! Like dogs angrily barking before a lion, they stand before the sleeping lion of the Vrishni lineage. As long as the lion Achyuta is asleep, this bull among Chedis and like a lion himself, makes those others seem like lions. O best of kings! O son! Shishupala has limited sense. Through he who is the soul of everything,[2] he desires to take all these kings to Yama's abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is certain that Adhokshaja[3] will take away Shishupala's energy. O Kounteya! O supreme among intelligent ones! You will be fortunate. The intelligence of the king of Chedi, and that of all these kings, has gone astray. Whomever that tiger among men[4] wishes to take, his intelligence goes as astray as that of the king of Chedi. O Yudhisthira! Madhava is the creator and the destroyer of the four kinds of beings that exist in the three worlds." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words, the king of Chedi replied to Bhishma in a harsh tone.'

263(38)

‘Shishupala said, “You are old and you defile your lineage. You try to frighten all these kings with your threats. Are you not ashamed? You are supreme among all the Kurus. But since you live in the third state,[5] it is but appropriate that you should offer advice that runs counter to dharma. O Bhishma! With you at the forefront, it is but natural that the Kouravas should be like a boat tied to a boat, or like a blind man following the blind. You have once again injured our minds by specially recounting this one’s deeds, such as the killing of Putana[6] and so on. O Bhishma! You are arrogant and stupid. If you wish to praise Keshava, why does your tongue not splinter into a hundred parts? O Bhishma! You are supposed to be old in wisdom. Yet you wish to praise a cowherd. His evil repute is recounted by even those who are like children among men.[7] O Bhishma! If he killed a vulture[8] when he was a child, what is extraordinary? Ashva and Vrishabha[9] weren’t skilled in the art of war. O Bhishma! What is extraordinary if he kicked down an inanimate wooden cart with his foot?[10] O Bhishma! It is my view that there was nothing remarkable in holding up Govardhana mountain for a week.[11] It was nothing but an anthill. O Bhishma! When we hear from you that he ate great quantities of food while sporting on a mountain top, we are astonished even more. You are knowledgeable in dharma. What can be more extraordinary than killing the greatly strong Kamsa, whose food he had partaken? O Bhishma! O wretch of the Kuru lineage! You do not know dharma. I will now tell you the words of the righteous ones, since you do not seem to have heard them.

‘“O Bhishma! Righteous, honest and virtuous ones have always instructed us, that in this world, one should not use weapons against women, cattle, brahmanas, those whose food has been partaken and those who seek refuge. It seems all this has been wasted on you. You speak to me about Keshava, praising him as old in wisdom, old and superior. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Do I not know anything? O Bhishma! How does the killer of a cow,[12] and the killer of a woman,[13] deserve praise? ‘He is foremost among all intelligent ones.’ ‘He is the lord of this universe.’ Hearing these words of yours, Janardana believes them to be true. But it is certain that all this is false. Even if a raconteur sings praises many times, those praises aren’t praise for the raconteur. Like *bhulingas*[14] and vultures, every being acts according to its nature. There is no doubt that your nature is vile. The Pandavas think Krishna deserves worship. They must also be evil. You show them the path. You speak of dharma. But though you know about dharma, you have strayed from that path. O Bhishma! Which learned one, with dharma in his heart and supreme among all learned ones, will act as you have, ignoring the precepts of dharma?

‘“O Bhishma! If you think you know dharma and think yourself to be wise in intelligence, why did you abduct the maiden Amba? She desired someone else. Your brother Vichitravirya followed the path indicated by the righteous ones. That king did

not accept the maiden you had abducted. He is the one on whose wives others had to beget children.[15] You believe yourself to be wise. But in your sight, others fathered offspring. That is not the path of the righteous. O Bhishma! Where is your dharma? Your brahmacharya is in vain. There is no doubt that you uphold it as a result of delusion or impotency. I do not see you as one who knows dharma. I do not see you prospering. You have not served the old,[16] or those who speak of dharma. Offerings, alms, studying and sacrifices characterized by a lot of dakshina—these are not worth a sixteenth of what is obtained through a son. O Bhishma! Whatever is obtained through many vows and fasts certainly goes in vain if one does not have a son. You do not have offspring. You are old. You utter false words in the name of dharma. Like the swan in the story, you will now be killed by your own relatives.

'"O Bhishma! Learned men in ancient times told this story. So that you can hear, I will now recount it completely. In ancient times, an old swan lived near the ocean. He always spoke of dharma and instructed the birds. But his conduct was otherwise. 'Practise dharma and avoid evil.' These were the words the birds heard from that expounder of dharma. O Bhishma! For the sake of dharma, the other birds brought him food, creatures that lived in the sea.[17] O Bhishma! Those birds also left all their eggs with him and then roamed in the waters of the sea. But the evil one ate all those eggs. That swan was always attentive to his own interests, while the others were negligent. He ate all the eggs of others. When the number of eggs declined, an extremely intelligent one[18] was suspicious and kept a watch on him. Having witnessed the swan's evil act, the bird was extremely unhappy and spoke about it to all the other birds. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Those birds assembled. When they witnessed it themselves, they killed the untruthful swan. O Bhishma! Since your conduct is like that of the swan, these angry lords of the earth will kill you, like the birds killed the swan. O Bhishma! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who know the ancient tales sing a song about this. I will repeat it for you exactly. 'O one who rides on the chariot of wings! Your act of eating the eggs contradicts your words. You will be killed in anger, because your soul shows your falsehood.'"'

264(39)

'Shishupala said, "I held in great esteem the immensely strong King Jarasandha. He did not wish to fight with this one,[19] saying that he was no more than a servant. Who will regard as praiseworthy the act of killing Jarasandha, undertaken by Keshava, together with Bhimasena and Arjuna? Entering through a way that was no gate and disguised as a brahmana, Krishna saw the influence of the wise Jarasandha. Since he knew the nature of the brahman and was himself devoted to dharma, he first offered the evil one water to wash his feet, but it was refused. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Jarasandha

invited Krishna, Bhima and Dhananjaya to partake of food, but Krishna acted in a contrary way.[20] You fool! If this one is the lord of the universe, as you think him to be, why did he not consider himself to be a brahmana? What is amazing to me is that though you make the Pandavas veer away from the path of the truth, yet they regard you as a righteous one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Or perhaps it is not strange that you, old and like a woman, are regarded as their guide in all matters."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When he heard these long words, harsh and spoken harshly, the powerful Bhimasena, supreme among those who are strong, was angered. His eyes were naturally large, like lotuses. Because of anger, they became dilated and copper-red. All the kings saw him knit his brows in three furrows, like the three-coursed Ganga[21] on the three peaks of his forehead. They saw his face, teeth gnashed in anger, like destiny about to consume all beings at the end of a yuga. The strong-minded one was about to swiftly arise. But the strong-armed Bhishma restrained him, like Ishvara[22] checking Mahasena.[23] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhima was soon pacified by Bhishma. The teacher calmed his anger with various words. That destroyer of enemies could not transgress Bhishma's words, like the ocean never crosses the shoreline, even though it is swollen after the rains. O lord of men! Though Bhimasena was angry with Shishupala, that brave one[24] did not tremble and remained steadfast in his manliness. Though that destroyer of enemies[25] kept jumping up, he[26] did not even think about him, like a lion ignoring small deer. On seeing Bhimasena, terrible in valour, thus angered, the powerful king of Chedi uttered words of jest, "O Bhishma! Let him go. Let all these lords of men watch him consumed by my power, like moths before a flame." On hearing these words of the king of Chedi, Bhishma, supreme among those of the Kuru lineage and supreme among those who are intelligent, spoke these words to Bhima.'

265(40)

'Bhishma said, "This one[27] was born in the royal lineage of Chedi with three eyes and four arms. As soon as he was born, he screamed and brayed like an ass. His father and mother, and their relatives, were struck with fear on seeing his malformed body and resolved to abandon him. The hearts of the king, his wife, his advisers and his priests were befuddled with anxiety. However, a disembodied voice spoke. 'O king! This son that has been born will be fortunate and supreme in strength. Therefore, do not be scared of him. Carefully tend to the child. O lord of men! His death will not be at your hands. The time has not yet come. The one who will bring about his death with weapons has also been born.' On hearing these invisible words, the mother became anxious as a result of affection for her son and said, 'With hands joined in salutation, I bow down before the one who has uttered these words about my son. Please let him speak some more. I wish to know who will bring about my son's death.' At that, the invisible voice

spoke again. 'There is one on whose lap this child will be placed, whereupon the extra arms will fall down on the ground like five-headed snakes and the third eye on the forehead will disappear. He will be the slayer.' On hearing of the three eyes and four arms and the invisible words, all the kings on earth came to see him.

'"The lord of the earth showed them homage as they arrived, in accordance with what they deserved and placed his son separately on each king's lap, one after another. But though the child ascended thousands of laps, what had been said did not come to pass. Then the Yadavas Samkarshana[28] and Janardana went to the capital of the Chedi kingdom to see the Yadavi who was their father's sister.[29] Rama and Keshava honoured every king in accordance with rank and superiority, inquired about everyone's welfare and seated themselves. After the two warriors had been shown homage, the queen herself placed her son on Damodara's[30] lap, with a pleasure that was more than usual. As soon as the child was placed on his lap, the extra arms fell off and the eye on the forehead sank.[31] On seeing this, she was miserable and frightened and prayed to Krishna for a boon. 'O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! I am afflicted with fear. Please grant me a boon. You provide relief to everyone who is oppressed. You are the refuge of everyone who is frightened.' 'Do not be afraid,' Janardana told his father's sister. 'O aunt! What boon will I give you? What shall I do? I will obey your words, be it possible or impossible.' At these words, she told Krishna, the son[32] of the Yadu lineage, 'O immensely strong one! Please pardon Shishupala's transgressions.' Krishna replied, 'O aunt! I will pardon one hundred offences of your son, even if they are offences that deserve death. Therefore, do not grieve.' O brave one! Such is this evil king Shishupala, evil in intelligence. Insolent because of Govinda's boon, he can now challenge you."'[33]

266(41)

'Bhishma said, "The Chedi king's intention of challenging Achyuta is not his own. There is no doubt that Krishna, lord of the universe, determined this. O Bhimasena! What king on earth dares abuse me now, as this defiler of his lineage has done, had it not been for incitement by destiny? O mighty-armed one! It is certain that he is but a small part of Hari's energy and the greatly famous Hari wishes to reclaim it. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! It is for this reason that the evil-minded king of Chedi roars like a tiger, without thinking about all of us."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Bhishma, the Chedi could not tolerate them and again spoke to Bhishma in anger.

'Shishupala said, "O Bhishma! Let our enemies possess the influence that Keshava possesses.[34] You always arise and praise him like a bard. O Bhishma! If your mind finds pleasure in praising others, then praise the real kings, leaving out Janardana. Praise Darada of Bahlika, supreme among kings. When he was born, he tore the earth asunder.

O Bhishma! Praise this Karna. He is the wielder of a mighty bow. He equals the thousand-eyed one in strength and is the ruler of Vanga and Anga. O Bhishma! Always praise Drona and Drouni.[35] The father and son are maharathas, supreme among brahmanas, and worthy of praise. O Bhishma! It is my view that if either of them is enraged, he can annihilate the earth, with all its mobile and immobile objects. O Bhishma! I do not see a lord of men who is Drona's equal in battle, or that of Ashvatthama's. Why don't you wish to praise them? O Bhishma! Since your mind is always fixed on praising, why don't you praise Shalya and the other rulers of earth? O king! But what can I do if you fail to heed the old ones. You have not heard what they, knowledgeable in dharma, said in ancient times. There are four things that must not be done—self-censure, worship of oneself, censure of others and worship of others.[36] These are not done by those who follow proper conduct. O Bhishma! If in your continual delusion you praise Keshava out of devotion towards him, no one will approve. How can you establish the entire universe in this evil-minded protector of herds, Bhoja's[37] servant? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Or perhaps your devotion is not a natural one. Have I not mentioned the bhulinga bird earlier? O Bhishma! The bhulinga bird lives on the other side of the Himalayas. What it spoke was always devoid of meaning. 'Do not act out of extreme courage' was what it always said. But in folly, it always acted out of extreme courage. O Bhishma! That foolish bird used to pick out pieces of flesh that stuck between the teeth of a feeding lion. O Bhishma! There is no doubt that the bird's life was dependent on the lion's pleasure. You are based in what is not dharma and always speak like it. O Bhishma! There is no doubt that you live at the pleasure of these lords of the earth. There is no one like you, engaged in deeds that the worlds abhor."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having heard these bitter words of the king of Chedi, Bhishma uttered these words, so that the king of Chedi could hear. "I truly live at the pleasure of these lords of the earth, I who do not consider these kings as equal to even straw." Hearing these words of Bhishma, the kings became angry. Some of them trembled, and others censured Bhishma. On hearing Bhishma's words, some mighty archers exclaimed, "Though old, this Bhishma is insolent and sinful. He deserves no pardon. Let all the angry kings assemble together and kill the evil-minded Bhishma like an animal, or burn him in a fire made out of straw." Hearing these words, the intelligent Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, spoke thus to the lords of the earth. "O lords of the earth! I do not see an end to these words, since there will be more words. Therefore, all of you listen to me. Whether you kill me like an animal or burn me in a fire made out of straw, I place this foot of mine on all your heads. Govinda Achyuta is here. We have offered him worship. If anyone's mind propels him towards death, let him challenge in battle Madhava Krishna, the wielder of the bow and the club, until he is brought down and his body merges with that of the god."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words of Bhishma, the immensely valorous king of Chedi desired to fight with Vasudeva and spoke to Vasudeva, "O Janardana! I am challenging you to battle. Come and fight with me, until I have killed you, along with all the Pandavas. O Krishna! Together with you, the Pandavas also deserve to be killed, since they have passed over the kings and worshipped you, who is not a king. O Krishna! It is my view that I must kill them. The evil-minded ones have acted like children and have offered homage to an undeserving one who is a slave and not a king." Having uttered these words, that tiger among kings stood up and roared in anger.

'Having heard these words, in the presence of all the kings and the Pandavas, Krishna replied in a soft voice. "O kings! This son of a lady of the Satvata lineage[38] is a great enemy of the Satvata clan. Though we have never done him harm, the cruel-minded one always seeks to injure us. O kings! Hearing that we had gone to the city of Pragjyotisha, this cruel one came and burnt down Dvaraka, though he is my father's sister's son. When the royal ones from Bhoja were sporting themselves on Mount Raivataka, he killed and captured all of them and took them to his own city. With certain evil in his heart, he wished to obstruct my father's sacrifice and stole the horse of the *ashvamedha*,[39] though it was surrounded by guards. The famous Babhru's[40] wife-to-be was travelling to the Souvira region to be married. But out of delusion and desire, he abducted her. He was cruelly disposed towards his maternal uncle, the ascetic Karusha and used his powers of maya to abduct Bhadra of Vishala.[41] For the sake of my father's sister, I have borne a great deal of unhappiness. However, it is fortunate that this is happening before all these kings. You are now witness to the malevolence he bears towards me. Know also the deeds that he has performed secretly. I can no longer pardon his offence today. He deserves to be killed only because of his insolence in front of this assembly of kings. Desiring a speedy death, this fool once offered himself to Rukmini.[42] But the fool did not obtain her, the way a shudra cannot hear the Vedas." Having heard these words of Vasudeva, all the assembled kings began to censure the king of Chedi.

'Having heard these words, the powerful Shishupala burst into laughter and uttered these scornful words. "O Krishna! Are you not ashamed to recount this, especially before all these kings? Rukmini was mine first.[43] O Madhusudana! No self-respecting man but you will admit before respectable ones that his wife had been someone else's first. O Krishna! Pardon me. Whether you pardon me or whether you show me respect, whether you bear friendship or enmity towards me, what can you possibly do to me?" When he was talking in this way, the illustrious Madhusudana, the destroyer of his enemies, angrily sliced off his head with the chakra. The mighty-armed one fell down like a mountain struck by the vajra. The kings saw a terrible energy rise up from the body of the Chedi king. O great king! It was like the sun rising in the sky. O lord of men! That

energy then paid homage to the lotus-eyed Krishna, worshipped by the worlds, and entered his body. On seeing the energy enter the mighty-armed one, supreme among all beings, all of the lords of the earth thought that this was extraordinary. When the Chedi was killed by Krishna, the cloudless sky poured forth rain. The earth trembled and blazing lightning struck. Some of those lords of the earth did not speak a word. At a time when these indescribable things were happening, they looked on at Janardana. Some angrily rubbed one hand with the tip of another. Others bit their lips, losing their senses in anger. But there were other kings who privately praised Varshneya. Some were angry. Others were in the middle.[44] The maharshis were delighted and went to Keshava and praised him. So did the great-souled brahmanas and the immensely powerful kings.

'Pandava[45] then instructed his brothers to perform the funeral rites for the brave lord of the earth who had been Damaghosha's son. The brothers followed these instructions. Then Partha,[46] with all the other lords of the earth, instated his[47] son in the kingdom of Chedi.

'O king! Then occurred the sacrifice of the king of the Kurus and brought prosperity to everyone and joy to the young, with an abundance of opulence—with great quantities of riches and grain, large amounts of food and eatables, auspicious in its beginnings and with the obstructions to peace removed. It was protected by Keshava. Until the great sacrifice of rajasuya was completed, the mighty-armed Janardana, the lord Shouri, the wielder of the *sharnga,*[48] chakra and club, guarded it. On completion, after Dharmaraja Yudhishthira had bathed,[49] all the kshatriya kings came to him and uttered these words. "O Ajamidha![50] O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! Your prosperity has been extended. You have obtained sovereignty. Your fame has been extended. O Indra among kings! With this deed, you have accomplished a great act for dharma. O tiger among men! We crave your leave. We have been shown homage in every way we desire. We now wish to return to our own kingdoms. Please grant us leave." On hearing these words of the kings, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira worshipped each king as he deserved and told all his brothers, "All these kings have assembled here out of their own pleasure. These scorchers of enemies are now leaving for their own kingdoms and are seeking my permission. O fortunate ones! Conduct these kings to the ends of our kingdom." The Pandavas were always followers of dharma. Hearing their brother's instructions, they followed each principal king, as each one deserved. O king! The powerful Dhrishtadyumna quickly conducted Virata, the maharatha Dhananjaya the great-souled Yajnasena,[51] the immensely strong Bhimasena, Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, the great warrior Sahadeva the brave, Drona and his son, Nakula Subala and his son and the sons of Droupadi and Subhadra[52] the kings of the mountains. Other bulls among the kshatriyas conducted other kshatriyas. And worshipped properly, all the brahmanas

departed.

‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! On the departure of all the lords among kings and the brahmanas, the powerful Vasudeva spoke to Yudhishthira. “O son of the Kuru lineage![53] I seek your leave to go to Dvaraka. Through good fortune, you have achieved rajasuya, supreme among sacrifices.” Having been thus addressed, Dharmaraja told Madhusudana, “O Govinda! It is through your favour that I have achieved this supreme sacrifice. Through your grace, all the kshatriyas have come under my sway and have attended upon me, bringing rich tributes. O brave one! Without you, we will find no pleasure. But of course you must go to the city of Dvaravati.” Having been thus addressed, the greatly famous Hari, with the righteous Yudhishthira with him, went to Pritha and affectionately said, “O father’s sister! Your sons have now obtained sovereignty and have obtained success and great riches. You should be pleased. Please grant me leave so that I can return to Dvaraka.” Keshava then bade farewell to Subhadra and Droupadi. Then, accompanied by Yudhishthira, he came out of the inner quarters. O great king! After he had bathed and prayed and the brahmanas had blessed him, Daruka yoked the beautifully constructed chariot that looked like a cloud and came. It had the great Garuda[54] on the banner. The great-souled Pundariksha then circumambulated it and ascending, departed for the city of Dvaravati. The fortunate Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, accompanied by his brothers, followed the immensely strong Vasudeva on foot. Then Pundariksha Hari stopped the supreme chariot for a moment and spoke to Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son. “O lord of the earth! Always remain steadfast in protecting your subjects, just as the god of rain[55] protects all beings and a large tree protects all birds. May you be the refuge of your relatives, like the thousand-eyed one[56] is of the immortals.” After conversing with each other, Krishna and the Pandavas took each other’s leave and went to their houses. O king! When Krishna, supreme among the Satvatas, had left for Dvaravati, only Duryodhana and Soubala[57] Shakuni, bulls among men, remained in that celestial sabha.’

Section Twenty-Seven

Dyuta Parva

This section has 734 shlokas and twenty-three chapters.

Chapter 268(43): 36 shlokas
Chapter 269(44): 22 shlokas
Chapter 270(45): 58 shlokas
Chapter 271(46): 35 shlokas
Chapter 272(47): 31 shlokas
Chapter 273(48): 42 shlokas
Chapter 274(49): 25 shlokas
Chapter 275(50): 28 shlokas
Chapter 276(51): 26 shlokas
Chapter 277(52): 37 shlokas
Chapter 278(53): 25 shlokas
Chapter 279(54): 29 shlokas
Chapter 280(55): 17 shlokas
Chapter 281(56): 10 shlokas
Chapter 282(57): 21 shlokas
Chapter 283(58): 43 shlokas
Chapter 284(59): 12 shlokas
Chapter 285(60): 47 shlokas
Chapter 286(61): 82 shlokas
Chapter 287(62): 38 shlokas
Chapter 288(63): 36 shlokas
Chapter 289(64): 17 shlokas
Chapter 290(65): 17 shlokas

Dyuta *means playing or gambling with dice, and also the resultant prize. So this section is about the gambling with dice.*

268(43)

Vaishampayana said, 'Duryodhana, bull among the Bharata lineage, lived in that sabha and with Shakuni, he slowly inspected that entire sabha. There, the descendant[1] of the Kuru lineage saw many divine designs that he had never seen before in the city of Nagasahrya.[2] One day, Dhritarashtra's son,[3] the lord of the earth, arrived at a place in the middle of the sabha that was paved with crystal. The king thought it to be water and, in alarm, raised up his clothes. His mind deluded, he wandered around the sabha, shame-faced and miserable. After some time, he mistook a lake with crystal water, adorned with crystal lotuses, for land and fell into the water with his clothes on. On seeing him fall into the water, the servants laughed out in delight and on the instructions of the king,[4] gave him fresh clothes. On seeing him in that fashion, the immensely strong Bhimasena, and Arjuna and the twins, all burst out in laughter. Since

he was incapable of bearing insults, he could not tolerate this. To save his face, he did not even look at them. He again drew up his clothes to ascend firm land and all the people again laughed out aloud.[5] He mistook a closed door to be open and hurt his forehead against it. On another occasion, taking an open one to be closed, he stepped away from the doorway. O lord of the earth! He thus committed various errors there. Having taken Pandavya's[6] leave, King Duryodhana set out for Gajasahrya.[7] On having witnessed the extraordinary opulence at the great rajasuya sacrifice, his mind was unhappy. As he travelled, he was inflamed at the prosperity of the Pandavas and evil thoughts were seeded in King Duryodhana's mind.

'O extender of the Kuru lineage! On seeing the happiness of the Parthas, the submission of the kings, the love the worlds had for them, from children onwards, and the supreme splendour of the great-souled Pandavas, Dhritarashtra's son Duryodhana turned pale. As he travelled, he thought intently about the sabha and the unrivalled prosperity of the intelligent Dharmaraja. Dhritarashtra's son Duryodhana was so inattentive, that he did not respond when Subala's son repeatedly spoke to him. On seeing him so distracted, Shakuni responded, "O Duryodhana! Why are you travelling with all these sighs?"

'Duryodhana replied, "O maternal uncle![8] I saw the entire earth brought under Yudhishthira's suzerainty, conquered with the power and weapons of the great-souled one with white horses.[9] I witnessed the sacrifice of Partha,[10] like that of the immensely radiant Shakra among the gods. I am full of envy and am burning day and night. I am drying up like a shallow pond in the hot season.[11] Witness—when Shishupala was felled by the foremost of the Satvatas,[12] there wasn't a single man who stood by his side. The kings were burnt with the flames of the Pandavas and pardoned the crime. Who can pardon that crime? Vasudeva's great deed was improper and succeeded only because of the power of the great-souled Pandavas. Various kings brought many jewels to King Kounteya[13] and worshipped him, like vaishyas who pay taxes. On seeing the blazing prosperity of the Pandavas, I am afflicted with jealousy and am burning, though I am not made that way. I will throw myself into the fire, or consume poison, or immerse myself in water. I cannot bear to be alive. What true man in the worlds has the fortitude to see his rivals prosper, while his own self is in decline? If today I bore the prosperity that has befallen them, I would not be a woman, or one who is not a woman, or a man, or one who is not a man. On witnessing their lordship over the earth, the likes of their riches and the likes of their sacrifice, how can a man like me not be feverish? Alone, I am not capable of acquiring such royal prosperity, nor do I see any help. Therefore, I am thinking of death. On seeing the pure prosperity of Kunti's son, I consider destiny to be supreme and endeavour to be meaningless. O Soubala! In the past, I have made attempts to kill him.[14] But he overcame all of them and prospered like a lotus in the

water. Therefore, I consider destiny to be supreme and endeavour to be meaningless. The Dhritarashtras[15] are declining and the Parthas are always prospering. When I see their prosperity and that beautiful sabha and the derisive laughter of the guards, I burn as if with fire. O maternal uncle! Please allow me now to suffer in misery and tell Dhritarashtra about the envy that has pervaded me.'

269(44)

'Shakuni said, "O Duryodhana! You should not feel any jealousy towards Yudhishthira, because the Pandavas have always benefited from their good fortune. In the past, you have tried to kill them with many means. But those tigers among men escaped because of their good fortune. They obtained Droupadi as a wife and Drupada and his two sons as allies, and the valorous Vasudeva as an ally in winning the earth. O lord of the earth! They obtained an undiminished share of paternal wealth and extended it through their own energy. What is there to lament in this? Having satisfied the fire, Dhananjaya obtained the great bow Gandiva, two inexhaustible quivers and other celestial weapons. He subdued the lords of the earth with that foremost among bows and the valour of his own arms. What is there to lament in this? He freed the danava Maya from being burnt by the fire. Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, then made him build that sabha. On Maya's command, the terrible rakshasas named Kinkaras guard that sabha. What is there to lament in this? O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have said that you have no allies. That is not true, because your maharatha brothers are always there to help you. The mighty archer Drona with his intelligent son,[16] Radheya the son of a suta,[17] the maharatha Goutama,[18] I and my brothers, and the valorous Soumadatti[19] are with you. With these as allies, conquer the entire world."

'Duryodhana replied, "O king! If you permit, I will defeat them[20] with you and the other maharathas. When I have conquered them, the entire earth will be mine, and all the lords of the earth and the sabha with its great riches."

'Shakuni said, "With the use of force, the masses of gods cannot defeat in battle Dhananjaya, Vasudeva, Bhimasena, Yudhishthira, Nakula, Sahadeva and Drupada and his son. They are maharathas, great archers, skilled in use of weapons and invincible in battle. O king! But I know the means through which Yudhishthira himself can be conquered. Listen and act accordingly."

'Duryodhana replied, "O maternal uncle! If there is a way to defeat them without any danger to our well-wishers and other great-souled ones, please tell me."

'Shakuni said, "Kunti's son loves to gamble with dice, but does not know how to play. If challenged to play, that Indra among kings will not be able to refuse. I am skilled in gambling with dice, there is no one on earth, or in the three worlds, who is my equal. Challenge Kunti's son to a game of dice. O king! O bull among men! With my skill in

dice,[21] there is no doubt that I will win for you the kingdom and the blazing prosperity. O Duryodhana! Tell the king[22] all this. And if your father permits, there is no doubt that I will vanquish him."[23]

'Duryodhana replied, "O Soubala! You yourself say all this to Dhritarashtra, foremost among the Kurus, in the proper way. I will not be able to do it."'

270(45)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having experienced the great rajasuya sacrifice of King Yudhishthira, wishing to do well to Duryodhana and having already heard Duryodhana's words about what he desired, Soubala Shakuni went to Dhritarashtra with Gandhari's son.[24] The lord of the earth was wise, though he was without sight, and was seated. Approaching the immensely intelligent one, Shakuni uttered these words. "O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Duryodhana is pale, yellow and thin. Notice that he is miserable and is always worrying. Why do you not examine and determine the exact reasons why your eldest son is so miserable with a grief that can only result from an enemy?" Dhritarashtra asked, "O Duryodhana! O son! What is the reason for your great grief? O son[25] of the Kuru lineage! If it is something that I can hear, please tell me. This Shakuni tells me that you are pale, yellow and thin and that you are worrying. I do not see any reason for your grief. O son! All my great riches are given to you. Your brothers and well-wishers never act so as to cause you displeasure. You wear the best of garments. You eat food laced with meat. You ride thoroughbred horses. Why are you then yellow and thin? Expensive beds, beautiful women, houses with all the qualities and pleasure grounds are there for your happiness. As with the gods, there is no doubt that all these await your command. O invincible one! O son! Why do you then grieve like a miserable one?"

'Duryodhana replied, "Like any miserable man, I do eat and dress. But I tolerate the passing of time, because I bear a terrible envy. He is truly a man who vanquishes his enemies and liberates his own subjects from the oppression of that enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satisfaction and pride destroy prosperity, so do compassion and fear. Immersed in these, no one achieves greatness. Having witnessed Kounteya Yudhishthira's blazing prosperity, I no longer find pleasure and that is what turns me pale. It is true that the prosperity of Kunti's son is invisible to me now. But I see the prosperity of my enemies and my own destitution as if before me now. It is for this reason that I have become pale, miserable, yellow and thin. Yudhishthira supports eighty-eight thousand snataka householders and each of them has thirty servant maidens. Besides this, ten thousand others always eat the best of food in Yudhishthira's house, served on golden plates. The king of Kamboja sends him black, dark and red skins of the *kadali*[26] deer, expensive blankets, chariots, women and cattle and horses in

hundreds and thousands. A hundred she-camels roam there three hundred times. O lord of the earth! The kings brought diverse riches in great numbers to that foremost of sacrifices undertaken by Kunti's son. I have never seen nor heard of such an inflow of wealth as I saw at the sacrifice of the intelligent son of Pandu. O king! O lord! I cannot be at peace and continuously worry because I have seen that limitless flood of riches of my enemy. *Vatadhana*[27] brahmanas, possessing the wealth of cattle, stood at the gate in groups of one hundred. They brought three *kharvas*[28] of riches as tribute, but were turned back. When they brought beautiful golden *kamandalus*[29] and filled these with tribute, it was then that they were allowed entry. In Varuna's brass pots, the ocean brought him ambrosia[30] that was better than the one brought for Shakra by the wives of the immortals. There were one thousand of them,[31] adorned with many jewels and golden. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing all this, I felt as if afflicted with fever. They obtained these by going to the oceans of the east and the south.[32] They had also gone to the west. But no one can go to the north, except the birds. Listen to me as I describe an extraordinary incident there. Whenever one hundred thousand brahmanas had been fed, it was arranged there that a signal would always be given through the blowing of conch shells. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I continuously heard the repeated blowing of conch shells.[33] On hearing these great sounds, my hair stood up on end. O lord of men! Many kings crowded the place as spectators. O great king! Those kings brought all kinds of riches with them, when they came to the sacrifice of the intelligent son of Pandu. Like vaishyas, the lords of the earth became servers to the brahmanas. O king! The king of the gods, Yama, Varuna, or the lord of the guhyakas[34] does not possess riches equal to Yudhishthira's wealth. Ever since I have witnessed the overwhelming prosperity of Pandu's son, my heart has been burning and I can find no peace."

'Shakuni said, "O you whose valour is in truth! Listen to the means whereby you can obtain the unmatched prosperity that you have seen with the Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am skilled in playing with dice, supreme on earth. I know their heart.[35] I know how to stake. I know the special art. Though Kounteya[36] loves dice, he has no knowledge. If challenged, he will certainly come. I will challenge him."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by Shakuni, King Duryodhana then instantly addressed these words to Dhritarasthra, "O king! This one[37] is skilled in dice. Through dice, he will win the wealth of Pandu's son. Please grant him permission." Dhritarashtra replied, "I always follow the counsel of my immensely wise adviser, Kshatta.[38] I will consult with him and then decide on the course of action. He places dharma in the forefront, has foresight and has our supreme welfare in mind. He will look at both sides[39] and tell us certainly what should be done." Duryodhana said, "If

you ask Kshatta, he will restrain you. O Indra among kings! And if you are restrained, I will certainly kill myself. O king! When I am dead, may you find happiness with Vidura. Enjoy the whole earth. What do you have to do with me?" Dhritarashtra heard those painful words, though they were affectionately uttered. Submitting to Duryodhana's desire, he instructed his servants. "Let artisans immediately build for me a beautiful and large sabha, with a thousand pillars and a hundred doors, which is fit to be seen. When it is scattered with gems and dice everywhere, quietly come and report to me that it has been built well and that it is fit to be entered." O great king! In an attempt to pacify Duryodhana, Dhritarasthra, lord of the earth, summoned Vidura, because he never took a decision without asking Vidura. Knowing the evils of gambling, he was still attracted towards it because of affection towards his son.

'Having heard this, the intelligent Vidura knew that the door to *kali*[40] was nigh. On seeing that the path to destruction was about to be opened, he quickly came to Dhritarashtra. The brother came to the great-souled elder brother and bowing down, with his head touching the other's feet, uttered these words. "O king! O lord! I do not approve of the decision you have taken. You should act in such a way that discord does not arise among your sons[41] because of this gambling." Dhritarashtra replied, "O Kshatta! If the gods in heaven show us their favour, there is no doubt that there will be no quarrel between my sons and my other sons. Auspicious or not auspicious, benign or malign, let this gambling match between relatives, occur, as it is certainly destined. When I and Bhishma, bull among the Bharata lineage, are there, no evil can possibly occur, even if fate has decreed it. Immediately ascend a chariot that is yoked with steeds with the speed of the wind. Go to Khandavaprastha and bring Yudhishthira. O Vidura! I tell you that there will be no going back on my decision. I think it is supreme destiny that has led to this." Having heard this, the intelligent Vidura thought that this should not be. Extremely unhappy, he went to the immensely wise son of the river.'[42]

271(46)

Janamejaya asked, 'How did that eventful gambling match among the brothers take place, which caused so much misery to my grandfathers, the Pandavas? O you who are immersed in the brahman! Who were the kings who were present in that sabha? Who among them approved of the match and who did not? O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear all this in detail, because this was the cause of the destruction of the world.'

The suta said, 'Having been thus addressed by the king, Vyasa's powerful student, knowledgeable in all the Vedas, recounted everything as it had happened.'[43]

Vaishampayana said, 'O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O great king! If you wish to hear it, then listen. I will tell you in detail what happened. Knowing Vidura's

views, Dhritarashtra, the son of Ambika, again privately spoke these words to Duryodhana, "O Gandhari's son! Forget the dice, Vidura does not approve of it. The immensely intelligent one will not speak in vain. I think what Vidura has said is for my supreme welfare. O son! Act accordingly, for I think that it will be for your welfare too. Vidura knows all the sacred texts, with their mysteries, that the illustrious and wise[44] devarshi Brihaspati, preceptor of Vasava, taught to the intelligent king of the gods. O son! I always follow his counsel. O king! The intelligent Vidura is considered as foremost among the Kurus, like the immensely wise Uddhava is acclaimed among the Vrishnis. O son! Dissension brings destruction to the kingdom, so give up the idea. You have obtained what the supreme texts say are what a son should obtain from his father and mother. O son! You have obtained the rank of your father and grandfather. You have studied, you have become learned in the sacred texts. You have always been reared at home. You are the eldest among your brothers and you have been established in the kingdom. Do you not consider this fortunate? You obtain the best of food and garments, unobtainable by other men. O mighty-armed one! O son! Having obtained this, why do you grieve? O mighty-armed one! This great kingdom of your father and grandfather is prospering. When you rule it, you shine like the lord of the gods in heaven. I know you to be wise. Then what is the reason for this grief? Why is your misery swelling up? Tell me."

'Duryodhana replied, "I am an evil man that I eat and dress, despite what I see. It has been said that a man who does not feel envy is a wretch. O Indra among kings! O lord! This ordinary prosperity does not please me. I am miserable on seeing the blazing prosperity of Kunti's son. The entire earth is subject to Yudhishthira's suzerainty. I am telling you that I am miserable, since I am still established here, alive. The Chaitrakis, the Koukuras, the Karaskaras and the Lohajanghas live in Yudhishthira's abode, like prostrate slaves. The Himalayas, the oceans, the regions along the shores that produce all the gems and all others are inferior to Yudhishthira's abode. O lord of the earth! Since I was the eldest and foremost, Yudhishthira offered me homage and appointed me to the task of receiving the gems. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Of the riches that were brought there, supreme and invaluable, one could not see the near end, nor the far one. My hands were too tired to receive all those riches. When those who had brought riches from distant places had left, I was still tired. Having brought gems from Bindusarovar,[45] Maya constructed a platform of crystal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the place full of lotuses, I took it to be water. On seeing me draw up my clothes, Vrikodara laughed at me. He thought me to be devoid of riches and deluded by the superior wealth of the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Had I possessed the ability, I would have killed Vrikodara there. The derision of a rival burns me. O lord of men! I again saw a similar pond full of lotuses. Thinking it to be made out of crystal, I fell into the water. At this, Krishna and Partha[46] laughed out loudly at me,

and so did Droupadi and the other women. This pained my heart. My garments having become wet, the servants gave me others on the king's[47] orders and this too made me more miserable. O lord of men! Listen when I tell you about another trick. In trying to go out through what looked like a door, but wasn't a door, I hit my head against a crystal slab and got hurt. Then, on seeing this from a distance, the twins were amused. In great sorrow, they held me in their arms. Sahadeva then repeatedly told me, as if amazed, 'O king! This is the door. Pass this way.' I saw jewels there, whose names I had not even heard of earlier. That is the reason why my heart is burning."'

272(47)[48]

'Duryodhana said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the main treasures I saw at the Pandava's, brought by the lords of the earth from everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing those riches, grown and mined, I no longer feel myself to be conscious. Kamboja gave riches in the form of skins of *eda,*[49] fine cat skins lined with gold, the best skins from deer, three hundred horses with parrot-like noses that were grey and of mixed colours and three hundred she-camels fattened with palm,[50] pulses[51] and nuts.[52] All the *govasana* and *dasamiya* brahmanas came to please the immensely fortunate and great-souled Dharmaraja.[53] They brought three kharvas of tribute, but were barred entry, and stood at the gate. When they brought beautiful and golden water pots[54] and offered their tribute in those, they were allowed entry. O great king! As tribute, the shudra kings who lived in Bharukaccha[55] brought one hundred thousand slave girls from the Karpasika region. They were dark and slender, with long hair and adorned in golden ornaments. They also brought *ranku*[56] hides, fit for the best of brahmanas, and horses from the Gandhara region. The men whose crops depend on the showers of Indra,[57] those who are born near the mouths of rivers, along the shores and banks of oceans and rivers, the Vairamas, the Paradas, the Vangas and the Kitavas, brought many riches and many jewels—goats, cattle, gold, donkeys, camels, honey from fruit and different types of garments. But restrained, they stood at the door.

'"Maharatha King Bhagadatta, the brave ruler of Pragjyotisha and the strong ruler of the mlechhas, came with yavanas. He brought a tribute of thoroughbred horses, as swift as the wind, but was barred and stood at the gate. After presenting a receptacle that was like iron[58] and swords with handles of ivory, Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisha left. I saw that many people from different directions were refused admission at the gate, though they brought rich tributes of gold and silver—with two eyes, three eyes, one eye on the forehead, those who wore headdresses, those who had no fixed abode, Bahukas, cannibals and those with only one foot. They brought horses that were as swift as

thought, with the colours of *indragopas*[59] and parrots, or with the colours of the rainbow[60] or red like the evening sky.[61] They were of many shades and there were also seized forest horses,[62] with the speed of the mind.

'"They also gave him[63] rich tributes of the best quality of gold. There were Chinas, Hunas, Shakas,[64] Oudras,[65] those who live inside mountains, Varshneyas, Harahunas, dark ones and those who live in the Himalayas. I do not remember the order of those who were barred entry at the gate. They gave much tribute in many forms. There were tens of thousands of asses, giant in form and with black necks. They were famous everywhere and trained well, capable of killing hundreds. There were large and colourful garments pleasant to the touch, from Bahlika[66] and China. There was wool, ranku[67] hides, silk, jute, cotton and thousands of other garments. They had the colour of lotuses and were soft, though not made of cotton. There were hides. There were long and sharp swords, double-edged swords,[68] spears, battleaxes and a hundred battleaxes from the other side of the ocean.[69] They brought juices, fragrances and many jewels in thousands. But despite the tribute, they were barred entry and stood at the gate. Shakas, Tukharas, Kankas, Romashas[70] and men with horns brought as tribute one hundred million[71] horses that could travel great and long distances. With crores of tribute of many kinds and unlimited gold, they stood at the door and were barred entry. Expensive seats, vehicles, beds, and many kinds of chariots adorned with gems and gold, made of ivory and decorated with gold, well-trained horses covered with tiger skins, many kinds of cushions, thousands of gems, *narachas*,[72] half-narachas, many kinds of weapons—this was the great tribute paid by the king from the east,[73] when he entered the great-souled Pandava's sacrificial arena."'

273(48)

'Duryodhana said, "O unblemished one! Listen to me as I describe the large and varied tribute, full of riches, given by the kings for the sake of the sacrifice. The kings who live along the banks of the river Shailoda, between Mounts Meru and Mandara, and enjoy the pleasurable shade of bamboo[74]—the Khasas, Ekashanas, Jyohas, Pradaras, Dirghavenus, Pashupas, Kunindas, Tanganas and Paratanganas brought large masses of *pipilika* gold in vessels, gathered by ants.[75] The strong residents of the mountains brought as tribute dark and coloured tails of yaks and others that were as white as moonbeams, a lot of sweet honey from the flowers of the Himalayas, garlands and water from the northern Kuru region and immensely powerful herbs from northern Kailasa. They bowed and stood at the gate of King Ajatashatru, but were denied entry. O lord of the earth! There were kings from the other side of the Himalayas, from the

mountains where the sun rises, from the banks of Varishena and Lohitya,[76] from the banks of the ocean and kiratas who live on roots and fruit and wear skins. They brought large masses of sandal and aloe wood, *kaliya*,[77] skins, jewels, gold, fragrances, ten thousand kirata slave girls, beautiful animals and birds from distant regions and copious quantities of radiant gold from the mountains. But despite all this tribute, they were refused entry and waited at the gate.

'"O lord of the earth! Kayavyas, Daradas, Darvas, Shuras, Vaiyamakas, Oudumbaras, Durvibhagas, Paradas, Bahlikas, Kashmiras, Kundamanas, Pourakas, Hamsakayanas, Shibis, Trigartas, Youdheyas, the kings of Madra and Kekaya, Ambashthas, Koukuras, Tarkshyas, Vastrapas, Pahlavas,[78] Vasatas, Mouleyas, Kshudrakas, Malavas, Shoundikas, Kukkuras, Shakas, Angas, Vangas, Pundras, Shanavatyas, Gayas, Sujatayas, Shrenimanas—all illustrious kshatriyas with weapons in their hands—brought hundreds of tribute for Ajatashatru. The chiefs from Vanga and Kalinga, from Tamralipta and Pundraka, brought garments and silk from the Koushiki.[79] On the instructions of the king, the gatekeepers told them, 'If you bring large and great tribute, only then will you be admitted.' So they each gave one thousand elephants, with tusks like the shafts of ploughs, caparisoned in gold and covered in cushions with the colour of lotuses. They were as large as mountains, always in rut and came from the shores of Kamyaka Lake. They were covered in armour, patient and trained well. They[80] then entered the gate. These and many other masses came from all the directions. There were other great-souled ones who offered many gems. The gandharva kin Chitraratha, Vasava's friend, gave four hundred horses with the speed of the wind. The gandharva Tumburu happily gave one hundred horses that had the colour of mango leaves, with gold harnesses. O Kouravya! O lord of the earth! The famous king of the Shukaras gave many hundreds of valuable elephants. As tribute, Virata from Matsya gave two thousand rutting elephants, caparisoned in gold. O king! King Vasudana from the kingdom of Pamshu gave twenty-six elephants and one thousand horses, all harnessed in gold. O lord of men! They had great speed and strength and were of the right age. He offered this and many other riches to Pandava. O lord of the earth! Yajnasena gave Pritha's sons fourteen thousand servant girls, ten thousand male servants with their wives and twenty-six chariots pulled by elephants. He offered his entire kingdom for the sacrifice. The Simhalas offered the best jewels found in the ocean, lapis lazuli, pearls and conch shells and hundreds of covers for housing elephants. Many dark-complexioned men, eyes copper-red and attired in garments adorned with gems, brought tribute and waited at the gate, having been refused entry.

'"Brahmanas brought gifts out of affection, kshatriyas because they had been defeated and vaishyas and shudras out of servitude. Out of affection and respect, they waited on Yudhishthira—all the mlecchas and all the varnas, the superior, the middle and the

inferior, arriving from many countries and many races. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In Yudhishthira's abode, I saw the kings make such large and great offerings to my enemy that I wish to die from grief. Now let me tell you about the servants of the Pandavas, to whom Yudhishthira supplies both raw and cooked food. There are three hundred thousand soldiers mounted on elephants. There are a hundred million chariots and innumerable foot soldiers. The raw food is measured out in one place, cooked elsewhere and distributed at another place. Auspicious sounds are heard. Among all the varnas, I have not seen a single one in Yudhishthira's abode who has not obtained food, is unhappy and has not been rewarded well. Eighty-eight thousand snatakas live a householder's life, each supported by thirty servant girls provided by Yudhishthira. They are happy and satisfied and always pray for the destruction of his enemies. In Yudhishthira's abode, ten thousand ascetics who have controlled their seed, eat from golden plates. O lord of the earth! Yajnaseni[81] does not eat until she has seen to it that everyone has eaten and is full, even hunchbacks and dwarfs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are only two who have not paid tribute to Kunti's son—the Panchalas because of the marriage alliance[82] and the Andhakas and the Vrishnis because of friendship."'

274(49)

'Duryodhana said, "The arya kings are devoted to truth and great in their vows, complete in their knowledge, eloquent and immersed in *vedanta,*[83] forbearing, modest, famous and with dharma in their hearts. Those kings who have been anointed wait on him.[84] There I saw many thousands of wild cows that had been brought by the kings as dakshina, with brass pots for milking. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As a mark of respect and of their own volition, the kings brought supreme vessels for the consecration there. Bahlika brought the chariot that was inlaid with gold. Sudakshina[85] yoked it with white horses from Kamboja. In affection, the immensely strong Sunitha[86] fixed the axle. Willingly, the king of Chedi[87] himself fixed the flagstaff. The king from the south had the armour ready, Magadha[88] the garland and the headdress. The great archer Vasudana[89] held the king of elephants, sixty years old. Matsya[90] fixed the sides,[91] Ekalavya held the footwear. Avanti had the many kinds of water required for the final bath. Chekitana[92] gave the quiver, the king of Kashi the bow and Shalya the sword with a golden hilt and with straps inlaid with gold. Dhoumya and the immensely ascetic Vyasa performed the anointing, after having placed Narada and the sages Devala–Asita[93] at the forefront. The maharshis attended the *abhisheka*[94] with pleasure. Just as the saptarshis approach the great Indra, lord of the gods, in heaven, with

Jamadagni's son,[95] the great-souled ones, learned in the Vedas and the mantras, came with large quantities of gifts.

'"Satyaki, with truth as his valour, held up the umbrella. Dhananjaya and Bhima fanned Pandava.[96] Varuna's conch shell had been constructed by Vishvakarma in ancient times with a thousand pieces of gold and had been given by Prajapati to Indra in that ancient era. The ocean now brought it for him[97] and Krishna anointed him with that. At this, I felt benumbed. They went to the western, eastern and southern oceans.[98] O father! But they did not go to the north, which is for the birds. To make it auspicious, hundreds of conch shells were blown and when they were blown together, my hair stood up at the roar. Kings were deprived of their own energy and fell prostrate on the ground. But Dhristadyumna, the Pandavas, Satyaki and Krishna as the eighth were valorous and kindly disposed towards each other.[99] They maintained themselves and on seeing me and the kings unconscious on the ground, laughed at us. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, delightedly, Bibhatsu gave the principal brahmanas five hundred bullocks, their horns plated with gold. Like lord Harishchandra, Kounteya accomplished the rajasuya and his prosperity was supreme. Shambara's slayer,[100] Youvanashva, Manu, King Prithu and Bhagiratha couldn't rival this. O lord! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having witnessed Partha's prosperity like that of Harishchandra, how should I see any good in remaining alive? O lord of men! A yoke attached by a blind man becomes loose. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The younger ones[101] are prospering, while the older ones[102] are decaying. O supreme among the Kurus! Having witnessed all this, I find no refuge, whichever way I look. That is the reason I am becoming thin. That is the reason I am pale and miserable."'

275(50)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O son! You are the eldest and the son of my eldest wife.[103] Do not bear hatred towards the Pandavas. He who bears hatred is always as unhappy as in death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira is inexperienced. He is your equal in goals and in friends. He does not hate you. Why do you hate him? O king! O son! You are his equal in birth and valour. Why do you covet your brother's riches? Do not desire out of delusion. Be calm and virtuous. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you wish to accomplish the glory of a sacrifice, let the priests arrange for the great sacrifice known as *saptatantu*. The kings will bring you great riches, gems and ornaments, from affection and respect. O son! The terrible act of desiring another's property brings misery. He who is satisfied with his own, remains anchored in his own dharma and is happy. The signs of wealth are lack of concern for another's prosperity, constant perseverance in one's own tasks and the protection of what one has obtained.

The man who is unmoved in calamities and always skilled and engaged in his own, vigilant and humble, will always witness good fortune. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Give at sacrifices, enjoy the pleasures you desire, sport in the company of women and be at peace.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “You know. But you confuse me, like a boat tied to another boat. Are you not attentive to your own interests? Do you have hostile feelings towards me? Dhritarashtra’s sons[104] follow your command and I don’t rule them. You always say that everything must be done for the sake of the future. If the leader has lost the path because he has been deluded by the enemy, how can his followers follow that path? O king! You are old in your wisdom, you follow the elders and you have control over your senses. You should not confuse us, when we are engaged in our own tasks. Brihaspati has said that the royal path must be different from that followed by the worlds. Therefore, a king must always be vigilant in protecting his own self-interest. O great king! A kshatriya’s path is one devoted to victory. O bull among the Bharata lineage! As long as one follows one’s creed, dharma and lack of dharma are irrelevant. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A charioteer uses his whip to drive out in all the directions, wishing to attack the blazing fortunes of his enemy. Those who are skilled in weapons say that the weapon isn’t only the one that cuts. A weapon is that which vanquishes the enemy, be it open or hidden. O king! Discontent is the root of prosperity. That is the reason I wish to be discontented. The supreme one is one who strives for prosperity. In attaining prosperity and riches, shouldn’t self-interest be our way? Others take away what has been obtained before. That is known as the dharma of kings. It was during a period of truce that Shakra cut off Namuchi’s[105] head, because he knew that enmity towards a foe is eternal. Like a snake swallows rats, the earth swallows up two —the king who does not strive and the brahmana who does not live at home. O lord of the earth! No one is by nature another man’s enemy. The enemy is that one whose pursuits are the same as one’s own, and not anyone else. He who stupidly watches the ascendance of the enemy’s party, leaves a disease unattended and cuts off his own roots. An enemy may be insignificant. But if he is allowed to grow in valour, he will destroy one, the way an anthill destroys the roots of a tree it has grown on. O Ajamidha![106] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not be pleased at the enemy’s prosperity. The wise ones should not bear the burden of this policy on their heads. A person who wishes for an increase in his prosperity, the way he has himself grown since birth, grows and prospers with his relatives. Valour brings swift growth. As long as I do not obtain the wealth of the Pandavas, I will always be in doubt. I will either obtain those riches, or lay down my life in the field of battle. O lord of the earth! If I cannot equal him,[107] what is the point of being alive today? The Pandavas are always prospering and we are stagnating.”’

276(51)[108]

'Shakuni said, "Challenge the enemy to a game of dice. I will rob Pandu's son Yudhishthira of the prosperity that you have seen, which has been burning you. Be clear that I will not fight in front of armies. Through the throw of dice, a skilful one can vanquish one that is not skilful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that the bow and arrows are my dice. The heart of the dice is the string of my bow. Know that the carpet[109] is my chariot."

'Duryodhana said, "O king! This one, who is skilled in dice, is ready to win over the prosperity of Pandu's son with dice. O father! You should find that pleasing."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "I always listen to the counsel of my brother, the great-souled Vidura. I will decide on the course of action after meeting with him."

'Duryodhana said, "O Kourava! There is no doubt that Vidura will make you refrain from the resolution. He is engaged in the welfare of the Pandavas and not mine. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![110] No man should engage in his task with another's counsel, because two minds seldom agree on a course of action. Like a straw mat[111] during the rainy season, a fool that abhors fear stands and destroys himself. Neither disease nor Yama wait for prosperity to come. Therefore, let us act for the good while there is time."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O son! I never like a fight with those who are stronger. Enmity creates distortion, and that itself is a weapon, though it is not made of iron. O prince! You think that disaster will bring welfare, this terrible collection of quarrels. Once it starts, in one way or another, it will release bows, swords and arrows."

'Duryodhana said, "The ancient ones created the rules of dice. It leads to neither evil, nor blows. Today, you should approve of Shakuni's words. Let your instructions be issued for the swift construction of a sabha.[112] Because the doors of heaven will become closer, it is appropriate for us to be engaged in this. Approve of this act with the Pandavas and we will then stand equal to them."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O Indra among men! I do not like the words that you utter. But do what brings you pleasure. Later, you will remember your words and suffer, because such words cannot bring prosperity to those who abide by dharma. A long time in the past, Vidura, who follows wisdom and learning, had foretold all this. The great calamity that will destroy the seed of the kshatriyas has now arrived and we are powerless."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having uttered these words, the wise Dhritarashtra decided that destiny alone was supreme. Fate robbed the king of his senses and he instructed his men[113] to obey his son's words. "Carefully build one thousand pillars adorned with gold and lapis lazuli. Let there be a hundred gates with arches made of crystal. Let the beautiful sabha be swiftly built, one *krosha*[114] long and one krosha wide." On hearing

these words, without hesitation, thousands of wise and skilled artisans swiftly built the sabha and stocked it with every kind of object. Then, in a short space of time, they informed the king that the beautiful assembly hall was ready and that it had been adorned with multicoloured gems and beautiful golden seats. Then Dhritarashtra, lord of men, spoke to the learned Vidura, foremost among his advisers, "Go to Prince Yudhishthira and swiftly bring him here at my command. Say that he and his brothers should come here and see this beautiful sabha that I have built, with many gems and decorated with expensive beds and seats. We will then have a game of dice among well-wishers." Knowing his son's mind and that fate could not be avoided, King Dhritarashtra, lord of men, acted thus. Vidura, supreme among learned ones, did not approve of his brother's words and thought them to be unjust. He spoke to him, "O king! I do not approve of this errand. Do not do this. I fear the destruction of our lineage. O Indra among men! When the sons are disunited, a quarrel is certain and I am concerned about this game of dice." Dhritarashtra replied, "O Kshatta! Unless destiny turns adverse, I am not worried about a quarrel. The universe is under the control of the creator. The entire world does not run independently. O Vidura! Therefore, today, go to the king[115] at my command and quickly bring Kunti's invincible son, Yudhishthira, here."'

277(52)

Vaishampayana said, 'On King Dhritarashtra's forceful command, Vidura started off towards the wise Pandavas, on horses that were noble and strong, trained well and possessing great speed. He proceeded swiftly and came to the king's[116] city and after being worshipped by the brahmanas, the immensely intelligent one entered. The palace was like Kubera's abode and the one with dharma in his heart[117] went to Dharmaputra Yudhishthira. Ajatashatru, the great-souled king who was always devoted to the truth, welcomed Vidura with due homage and worship and then asked about the welfare of Dhritarashtra and his sons.

'Yudhishthira asked, "O Kshatta! I do not see your mind to be happy. I hope everything is well. Are the sons[118] obedient to their elders? Are the commoners obedient to his rule?"

'Vidura replied, "The great-souled king is well with his sons. Surrounded by his kin, he rules like Indra. O king! Surrounded by his sons who are obedient, he is content. He is without worries and is firm in the desires of his own heart. The king of the Kurus has first asked me to enquire about your health and welfare and then say, 'I have built a sabha that matches yours. O son! Please come with your brothers and see it. O Partha! Assemble there with your brother and have a game of dice with your well-wishers. We will be delighted at your arrival and so will all the Kurus who are assembled there.' The

great-souled King Dhritarashtra has assembled gamblers there.[119] You will see the rogues[120] assembled there. I have come here for this. O king! Agree."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Kshatta! Gambling can produce quarrels. Knowing this, which intelligent one will consent to gambling? What do you think is the right course of action for us? We are always obedient to your words."

'Vidura replied, "I know that gambling is the root of all misery. I made every effort to restrain him. However, the king has sent me to you. O wise one! Knowing this, do what is best."

'Yudhishthira asked, "Other than the sons of King Dhritarashtra, who are the other rogues[121] who are there to play? O Vidura! I am asking you. Tell me. Who are the hundreds with whom one will have to play?"

'Vidura replied, "O lord of the earth! There is Shakuni, king of Gandhara. That king is eager to play, has a skilled hand and knows the nature of the dice. There are Vivimshati, King Chitrasena, Satyavrata, Purumitra and Jaya."

'Yudhishthira said, "It seems that some of the most feared rogues[122] have assembled there. They are sure to play with the powers of maya. However, everything is under the control of the creator. I will not refuse to play with those rogues. O Vidura! I do not wish to go and gamble on King Dhritarashtra's command. A father always has a son's welfare in mind. Therefore, tell me what I should do.[123] I have no desire to gamble with Shakuni. But if the confident[124] one challenges me in the sabha, I will never refuse, because that has been my eternal vow."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus spoken to Vidura, Dharmaraja instructed that all the arrangements for the journey should quickly be made. Next day, he set out with his army and his attendants, and with the honoured Droupadi and other women of the household. "Destiny robs us of reason, like a glare falling before the eye.[125] As if tied in a noose, man follows the will of the creator." Uttering these words, King Yudhishthira set out with Kshatta. Partha, the destroyer of enemies, could not ignore the summons. He ascended the chariot given by Bahlika. Partha Pandava, the destroyer of enemies, dressed in royal garments, left with his brothers. Brahmanas walked ahead of him and his regal prosperity blazed. He was summoned by Dhritarashtra in accordance with what has been decreed by destiny.

'Arriving in Hastinapura, he went to Dhritarashtra's palace. Pandava, the one with dharma in his heart, met Dhritarashtra and Drona, Bhishma, Karna and Kripa. As is proper, the lord also met Drona's son.[126] The mighty-armed one then met Somadatta, Duryodhana, Shalya, the valorous Soubala and all the other kings who had assembled there before him, and Jayadratha and all the other Kurus. Surrounded by his brothers, the mighty-armed one then entered the abode of the immensely wise King Dhritarashtra and met there Queen Gandhari, who was always devoted to her husband. She was

surrounded by her daughters-in-law, like Rohini[127] by the stars. After showing homage to Gandhari and being welcomed by her in return, he saw his aged father,[128] the wise lord whose eyesight was his knowledge.[129] O king! The king inhaled the fragrances of the heads[130] of the descendants[131] of the Kuru lineage and of the four Pandavas,[132] led by Bhimasena. O lord of the earth! On seeing the handsome Pandavas, tigers among men, all the Kouravas were extremely delighted. Taking their leave, the Pandavas entered their houses, full of jewels. The women came to see them, Droupadi at their forefront. On witnessing Yajnasena's[133] blazing prosperity, Dhritarashtra's daughters-in-law were not enthused.

'After having conversed with the women, the tigers among men went out. They performed physical exercises and the due rituals. After the daily rituals were over, they covered themselves all over with divine sandalwood. When their minds were pure, the brahmanas pronounced benedictions on them. Having eaten the best of food, they retired to their sleeping quarters. Women sung to them and the descendants of the Kurus went to sleep. They spent the pleasant night in sexual pursuits. After resting for some time, they discarded their sleep[134] to the sound of praises of bards. Having happily slept during the night, they performed all the daily rites in the morning and entered the beautiful sabha, crowded by rogues.'[135]

278(53)

'Shakuni said, "O king! The carpet has been spread out in the sabha and these people have found the time. O Yudhishthira! The time for gambling and fixing the nature of the dice has come."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O king! Dishonest gambling is evil. There is no kshatriya valour in that. Nor is there any good policy in it. Why do you then praise playing with the dice? O Shakuni! The learned do not praise deceitful gambling. Like a cruel person, do not defeat us through a crooked path."

'Shakuni said, "He who knows the numbers and is knowledgeable about deceptions, is tireless in the art of gambling and is extremely intelligent in gambling, is the one who knows all the techniques. Through handling the dice, one can defeat the enemy. Blaming destiny is pointless. O king! Let us gamble and have no anxiety. Let us immediately decide on the stakes and not tarry."

'Yudhishthira replied, "Asita–Devala are supreme among sages and always frequents the doors of the worlds. They have said that it is a sin to play with deceitful gamblers. It is best to win a battle through dharma, in which case, gambling is sanctioned. Aryas do not use mleccha language, nor use deceit in behaviour. Men who are truthful in their vows do not use trickery in a battle. We have always sought to protect deserving brahmanas with our strength. O Shakuni! Do not play beyond those limits and do not

win in excess.[136] I do not desire happiness and riches through deceit. But even if a gambler plays without deceit, gambling is never praised."

'Shakuni said, "O Yudhishthira! The learned triumph over non-learned only through trickery. That is how the wise triumph over the stupid, but people don't call it trickery. In approaching me for the game, if you think that I will resort to trickery, if that is your fear, then refrain from the game."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O king! Once challenged, I will not withdraw. That is the vow I have taken. Fate is the powerful one and we are in the power of destiny. Who in this assembly will I play with? What is the counter-stake? Let the gambling begin."

'Duryodhana said, "O lord of the earth! I will stake all my jewels and my riches. My maternal uncle, Shakuni, will gamble on my behalf."

'Yudhishthira replied, "To me, it seems unfair that one man should gamble in another's place. O learned one! You know this. However, if that is what you want, so be it."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When arrangements had been made for the gambling, all the kings, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, entered the sabha—Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, the immensely intelligent Vidura. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Others also followed, not at all pleased in their minds. Those immensely energetic ones, with necks like those of lions, sat separately and together, on many colourful seats. O king! With the assembled kings, that sabha was radiant, like resplendent heaven when the gods have assembled. O great king! They were all brave warriors, learned in the Vedas and their forms were like that of the sun. Then the gambling between the well-wishers started.

'Yudhishthira said, "O king! This is a beautiful chain of gems, inlaid in supreme gold. It represents a lot of riches and has been procured from the whirl of the ocean.[137] O king! This is my stake. What is your counter-stake? Let it be placed in the proper order and I will win this gamble."

'Duryodhana replied, "I also possess many gems and riches. But they serve no particular end for me. I will win this gamble."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Shakuni, who knew the heart of the dice, grasped the dice. And Shakuni told Yudhishthira, "I have won."'

279(54)

'Yudhishthira said, "O Shakuni! You have won this gamble from me by using deceit. Let us now grasp the dice and play a thousand times. I have a hundred laden jars, each filled with a thousand gold coins. O king! That apart, my treasury has inexhaustible gold and much gold.[138] Those are the riches I now stake to gamble with you."'

Vaishampayana said, 'As soon as he had spoken, Shakuni told the king, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "My royal chariot is covered with tiger skin and is worth a

thousand. It is finely built, beautiful, makes a thunderous noise and is adorned with nets of bells. It gladdens the heart and brought us here. This sacred chariot, supreme among all chariots, roars like the clouds and the ocean. It is drawn by eight horses that are famous throughout the kingdom. They are noble and have the colour of ospreys. No one who walks the earth can escape their hooves. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard this, Shakuni used deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Soubala! I have one thousand elephants that are in must. They have golden girdles and are hung with golden garlands. They are spotted.[139] They are well trained, with fine tusks and are capable of bearing kings. They can withstand every kind of noise in battle. They have giant tusks like shafts[140] and each bull has with it eight she-elephants. All of these elephants have the shade of new clouds[141] and are capable of battering down enemy cities. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words, Soubala laughed at Partha. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have one hundred thousand slave girls. They are young and extremely beautiful. They wear bracelets and armlets,[142] necklaces of gold coins and wear ornaments. They wear expensive garlands and ornaments, beautiful garments, and are anointed with sandalwood paste. They wear jewels and gold and all of them are dressed in sheer garments. They are skilled in singing and dancing. On my instructions, they wait upon and serve the snatakas, advisers and kings. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have thousands of male slaves. They are always dressed in fine garments and are skilled and ready to serve. They are wise, young, skilled and intelligent and wear polished earrings. With plates in their hands, they feed the guests day and night. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have as many[143] chariots. They have pennants and are equipped with golden vessels. There are also well-trained horses, charioteers and wonderful warriors. Regardless of whether they fight or do not fight, each of them receives one thousand as monthly salary. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Partha, the evil one resorted to

deceit. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have gandharva horses that are spotted and have the colour of partridges. They have golden harnesses and were happily given by Chitraratha[144] to Gandivadhanva.[145] O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard this, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have ten thousand chariots, carts and horses. They are yoked to the best draught animals. I have thousands of soldiers from each varna. They drink milk and feed on rice and grain. There are sixty thousand of them and all of them have broad chests. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira said, "I have four hundred treasure chests made of copper and iron. Each of them has five receptacles filled with beaten gold. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."'

280(55)

'Vidura said, "O great king![146] Listen to what I am going to tell you and learn, even though a dying man finds no pleasure in medicine. In earlier times, when the evil-minded Duryodhana, the destroyer of the Bharata lineage, was born, he cried out in the voice of a jackal. He is destined to cause our destruction. A jackal lives in your house in Duryodhana's form and you do not know this. From me, listen to what Kavya[147] said. 'The collector of honey obtains the honey, but does not know about the fall.[148] Having climbed, he will later be immersed, or fall down and perish.' Like the collector of honey, he[149] is drunk at the prospect of gambling with dice. He does not know of the fall, consequent to the enmity with these maharathas. O great king! You know the normal royal practice.[150] The Andhakas, Yadavas and Bhojas assembled and abandoned Kamsa. At their request, Krishna, the slayer of enemies, killed him[151] and all the relatives rejoiced for a hundred years. On your instructions, let Savyasachi oppress Suyodhana.[152] Let the Kurus be happy through the oppression of the evil one. O king! Purchase peacocks for this crow.[153] Purchase tigers for this jackal. Purchase the Pandavas and do not sink into this ocean of grief. 'For the sake of a family, a man should be sacrificed. For the sake of a village, a family should be sacrificed. For the sake of a country, a village should be sacrificed. For the sake of the soul, the earth should be sacrificed.' Thus spoke Kavya, the omniscient one, knowledgeable in all sentiments and

terrible to all enemies, when he asked the great asuras to abandon Jamba.[154]

'"O king! It is said that there were forest-dwelling birds that vomited gold. A man took them to live in his house, but then killed them out of greed.[155] O scorcher of enemies! He was blinded because of his temptation for gold. Because of his greed, he destroyed both what he had and what he could have had. O bull among the Bharatas! Do not oppress the Pandavas because of your immediate desire. You will later rue your delusion, like the man who killed the birds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Like a maker of garlands, take flowers affectionately from the Pandavas one by one, as they flower. Like a maker of charcoal, do not burn down the roots of the tree. Do not go to your destruction with your sons, advisers and troops. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Who is capable of fighting with the Parthas when they stand together? O king! Not even the lord of the Maruts,[156] together with the Maruts."'

281(56)

'Vidura said, "Gambling is the root of all quarrels. Its consequence is dissension and great wars. Taking recourse to it, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's son, creates terrible enmity. Because of Duryodhana's crime, all the descendants of Pratipa[157] and Shantanu, together with their terrible armies and with the descendants of the Bahlikas, will be destroyed. Like an angry bull that breaks its own horns forcibly, Duryodhana's stupidity will drive safety away from this kingdom. O king! A brave and wise man who disregards his sagacity and follows another's mind, is like one who goes to the sea in a boat guided by a child and is immersed in terrible affliction. Duryodhana is gambling with Pandava and it pleases you because you think he is winning. But in this overdone deed is created a war that will lead to the destruction of all men. This badly designed act will lead to a decline in fruits. In the heart of the one who has resorted to counsel, there is great composure.[158] Friendship with Yudhishthira will lead to good fruit. Through pacification, the one with the excellent bow[159] will no longer exhibit enmity. O descendants of Pratipa! O descendants of Shantanu! O kings! Listen to Kavya's words and do not cross the limits. The terrible fire has blazed forth. Extinguish it before there is a war. If Pandava Ajatashatru[160] is defeated in dice and his anger is not pacified by Vrikodara, Savyasachi and the twins, there will be no refuge in the terrible onslaught that will ensue. O great king! You are a source of great riches, as much as you desired, even before this game. Even if you win great riches from the Pandavas, what is the gain? Pritha's sons are the source of wealth. We all know Soubala's skills in the game. This one from the mountains[161] knows techniques of deceit with dice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let Shakuni return whence he came. The one from the mountains fights with the powers of maya."'

'Duryodhana said, "O Kshatta! You always take pride in praising the fame of our enemies and secretly deprecate Dhritarashtra's sons. O Vidura! We know whom you are friends to. You always look down upon us, as if we are children. The man whose love is elsewhere is clearly revealed, from the way he distributes censure and praise. Your tongue reveals your heart and mind and that your mind is antagonistic. We embraced you like a serpent. Like a cat you injure the one by whom you are sustained. It is said there is no sin worse than killing one's protector. O Kshatta! How is it that you don't fear sin? Having vanquished our enemies, we have obtained great fruits. O Kshatta! Do not use harsh words against us. You always praise friendship with those who hate us and that is the reason you harbour hatred towards us. A man becomes an enemy by uttering unpardonable words. He secretly hides the praise for the enemies. How does shame not stop you? You are now speaking whatever you desire.[162] We know your mind, and do not disregard us. Learn from proximity with those who are wise and old. O Vidura! Protect the fame you have earned so far. Do not concern yourself with the affairs of others. O Vidura! Do not deprecate us by mentioning your deeds. Do not always use such harsh words against us. O Vidura! I never ask you what you think. O Kshatta! Desist, because our patience is wearing down. There is one controller[163] and there is no second controller. That controller controls when a man is asleep in the womb. Through his control, like water flowing downwards, I flow in the direction appointed by him. He who uses his head to break a stone and he who feeds a serpent, are controlled in those deeds by his[164] instructions. He who wishes to control another by force only finds an enemy. A learned one looks up to those who act in friendship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one lights a blazing fire and does not escape from it, even the remnants of ashes will not be found anywhere. O Kshatta! One should not give shelter to someone who hates and is from the enemy's party, especially if that man bears ill will. O Vidura! Therefore, go wherever you wish. However well treated, an unchaste wife will always leave."

'Vidura replied, "O king![165] He who gives to a man in this fashion, for him all friendship comes to an end. The minds of kings are always unsteady. After granting protection, they slay with clubs. O son of a king! You do not think yourself to be a child. O evil-minded one! You consider me to be a child. One, who has first accepted a man as a well-wisher and then reviles him, is the one who is a child. One with an evil mind never does that which brings welfare, like a corrupt woman in the house of a learned brahmana. That which is certain does not please this bull among the Bharatas, like a sixty-year-old husband to a young woman. O king! If you only wish to hear words that please you in all deeds, regardless of good or bad, ask the women, the dull and the crippled. Go ask those who are likewise stupid. O descendant of the Pratipa lineage! It is

certainly easy to find a man who says things that please you. It is rare to find those who render unpleasant and right advice. He who sticks to the path of dharma and offers advice to his lord, regardless of whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, however unpleasant, is a true aide to the king. O great king! Drink that which is healthy, bitter, pungent, hot, harsh, foul-smelling and revolting. This is what the good always drink and the evil refuse. Drink it and regain your calm. I always wish fame and prosperity to Vichitravirya's sons and their sons. Wherever you may be, I pay you my respects. May the brahmanas utter benedictions over me. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![166] I will carefully tell you this. Learned ones should never anger serpents that have venom in their eyes."'[167]

283(58)

'Shakuni said, "O Yudhisthira! You have lost great riches of the Pandavas. O Kounteya! Do you have any other riches that you have not lost yet?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "O Shakuni! O Soubala! I know of unlimited riches that I possess. Why do you ask me about my wealth? I can stake *ayuta*,[168] *prayuta*,[169] kharva,[170] *padma*,[171] arbuda,[172] *shamkha*,[173] *nikharva*[174] and an entire ocean.[175] O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O Soubala! I have many cattle, horses, milch cows, sheep and goats, of many species, to the east of the Sindhu.[176] O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O king! The riches that I have left are my city, the country, the land of all the non-brahmanas and the nonbrahmana subjects. O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhisthira replied, "O king! These princes[177] are resplendent in their ornaments, their earrings, the golden decorations on their breasts and the other bodily decorations. O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira replied, "This dark youth with the red eyes is Nakula, with long arms and the shoulders of a lion. He and everything that he possesses will be one stake."

'Shakuni said, "O King Yudhisthira! But Prince Nakula is dear to you. If he becomes

part of our riches, what will you have left to gamble with?"'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, Shakuni then flung the dice and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Yudhishthira replied, "This Sahadeva is the one who administers dharma. He is known in the worlds as a learned one. Though this beloved prince does not deserve it, I will play with him with one who is not loved."'[178]

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Shakuni said, "O king! I have now won Madri's two sons, dear to you. But I think you regard Bhimasena and Dhananjaya as dearer."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O foolish one! Without regard to what is proper, you are following that which is not dharma. You are trying to create dissension among those who are one of heart."

'Shakuni said, "O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! One who is intoxicated falls into a hole and remains there, like the trunk of a tree. You are our elder and our superior. I bow down before you. O Yudhishthira! When gamblers play, they utter mad ravings about what they have not seen, whether asleep or awake."

'Yudhishthira replied, "Like a boat, he carries us over to the other bank of battle. He is a powerful prince who defeats his enemies. The world knows that this warrior does not deserve it. O Shakuni! I will play with you for Phalguna."'[179]

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Shakuni said, "Pandava Savyasachi, the foremost archer among the Pandavas, has been won and has become mine. O king! Now play with your beloved Bhima. That is all you now have left to throw."

'Yudhishthira replied, "He is our leader and guide in battle. He is like the wielder of the vajra,[180] the enemy of the demons. He is great of soul, with slanted eyes and knitted brows. His shoulders are like those of a lion and his anger is long-lasting. There is no other man with strength like his. He is the slayer of enemies and foremost among those who wield the club. O king! Though this prince does not deserve it, I will play with you for Bhimasena."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, "I have won."

'Shakuni said, "O Kounteya! You have lost a great deal of riches. You have lost your brothers, your horses and your elephants. Tell us if there are any riches that you have not yet lost."

'Yudhishthira replied, "I myself am left, especially loved by all my brothers. If won over, until the time of destruction, I will do whatever deed I am asked to do."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told

Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Shakuni said, “O king! You have allowed yourself to be won and you have committed the worst evil act. When there are riches left, it is evil to allow oneself to be won.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus spoke the one who was skilled in gambling with the dice. He had won in the game, one by one, the brave warriors of the world.’

‘Shakuni said, “But you have your beloved queen, who has still not been won in the game. Use Krishna Panchali[181] as a stake and using her, win back yourself.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “She is neither too short, nor too tall. She is neither too dark, nor too red. Her eyes are red with love and I will play with you for her. Her eyes are like the petals of lotuses in the autumn. Her fragrance is like that of lotuses in the autumn. Her beauty serves that of lotuses in the autumn. Her beauty is like that of Shri herself. Such is her lack of cruelty, her wealth of beauty and the goodness of her conduct, that every man desires her for a wife. She retires to bed last and she is the first one to wake up. She looks after the cowherds and the shepherds. She knows everything about what should be done and what should not be done. When covered with sweat, her face looks like a lotus or a jasmine. Her waist is shaped like an altar. Her hair is long. Her eyes are copper-red. She does not have too much of body hair. O king! O Soubala! I will make the beautiful Droupadi of Panchala, slender of waist, my stake. Let us play.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the intelligent Dharmaraja uttered these words, all the elders assembled in the sabha raised words of “shame”. O king! The sabha seemed to shake and the kings talked among themselves. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others broke out in sweat. Vidura buried his head in his hands and sat with a downcast face, thinking and sighing like a serpent, like one who has lost his senses. But Dhritarashtra was delighted and failing to control his emotions, repeatedly kept asking, “Has he won? Has the stake been won?” Karna, Duhshasana and their allies were happy. But tears began to flow down the eyes of others who were in the assembly hall. However, Soubala was insolent with success and proud of victory. He instantly flung the dice and said, “I have won.”’

284(59)

‘Duryodhana said, “O Kshatta! Bring Droupadi here, the beloved and honoured wife of the Pandavas. Let her sweep and perform our tasks. It will be good to see her with the serving girls.”

‘Vidura replied, “Through people like you, the impossible happens. O evil one! You do not know that you are tying yourself in a noose. You do not realize that you are extended over a precipice. You are only a deer, but you are angering tigers. O one who is greatly evil at heart! Angry serpents, full of great venom, have raised themselves above your head. Do not anger them and go to Yama’s abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Krishna[182] has not yet become a slave. The king[183] offered her as

stake when he was no longer his master. A bamboo bears fruit only to kill itself.[184] This king, Dhritarashtra's son, also bears fruit. He does not see that gambling leads to fearful enmity and that he is ripe, like one about to meet his destiny. No one should cause hurt, or act cruelly. Nor should one extract from one who is miserable. Words that cause pain and hurt others should not be uttered, because they lead to hell. From his lips, a man utters words that hurt. The one stung by them burns night and day. Therefore, learned ones do not utter words that unleashed on another, pierce the depths of the heart. When a weapon could not be found, by pawing the ground, it is said that a goat dug up a weapon that was used to cut its own throat.[185] Therefore, do not dig up an enmity with the sons of Pandu. No one speaks ill of the forest-dweller or householder. But like dogs, the same men bark at the ascetic who is full of learning.[186] Dhritarashtra's son does not know the crooked and terrible door that leads to hell. Duhshasana and many others among the Kurus will follow him there, through the route of gambling. Gourds may sink[187] and stones may float. Boats may eternally be lost on the seas. But King Dhritarashtra's deluded son will not listen to my words, which are appropriate[188] for him. It is certain that this will be the end of the Kurus, a terrible end that will lead to everyone's destruction. The words of Kavya and his well-wishers were apt.[189] But because greed has expanded, they are no longer listened to."'

285(60)

Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra's son was insolent with pride. He said, "Kshatta be damned." In the midst of all the revered ones in the assembly hall, he looked at the attendant and said, "O Pratikamin![190] Go and bring Droupadi here. You have no reason to fear the Pandavas. It is only Kshatta who is scared and speaks to the contrary. But he never wishes that our prosperity should increase." Having heard the words of the king, the suta attendant[191] swiftly departed and went to the queen of the Pandavas, like a dog entering a lion's lair.

'The attendant said, "O Droupadi! Yudhishthira was intoxicated by gambling and has lost you to Duryodhana. O Yajnaseni! Now come to Dhritarashtra's house. I must take you for the tasks you have to perform." Droupadi replied, "O Pratikamin! How can you speak like this? Can any prince stake his wife in a gamble? The king must have been deluded in his intoxication for the game. Could he not find anything else for the stake?" The attendant said, "Pandava Ajatashatru offered you as stake when there was nothing left as stake. The king had earlier staked his brothers and then himself. O Princess! He next staked you." Droupadi replied, "O son of a suta! Go back to the assembly hall and ask that gambler from the Bharata lineage whether he first lost himself or me. O son of a suta! After having found this out, come back to me." He went to the assembly hall and

repeated Droupadi's words. "Droupadi wants to know, 'Whose lord were you when you lost me? Did you lose yourself first or me?'" Yudhishthira sat there unmoved, like one who has lost his senses. He did not reply to the suta, in words that were either good or bad. Duryodhana said, "Let Panchali Krishna come here and ask the question herself. Let everyone in the sabha hear what they have to say to each other." The attendant was in Duryodhana's service and went to the king's house.[192] Though miserable, the suta told Droupadi, "O Princess! Those in the assembly hall are summoning you. It seems to me that the destruction of the Kurus is near. O Princess! Since that weak-minded one[193] wants you in the sabha, he will no longer be able to protect our prosperity." Droupadi replied, "The one who determines everything has destined thus. Both the young and the old are touched thus. It has been said that dharma is supreme in the worlds. If it is sustained, peace will be brought." O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing of Duryodhana's intentions, Yudhishthira sent a trusted messenger to Droupadi.[194] Panchali was going through her menses then. She was weeping and clad in a single garment tied below the navel, she went to the sabha and stood before her father-in-law.[195] Looking at the faces of the assembly, King Duryodhana delightedly told the suta,[196] "O Pratikamin! Bring her here. Let her be in front of us, so that the Kouravas can speak to her." The suta was in his[197] servitude, but was scared of the wrath of Drupada's daughter. Giving up his pride, he told the assembly, "How can I speak to Krishna?" Duryodhana said, "O Duhshasana! This son of a suta has limited intelligence. He is frightened of Vrikodara. Go and bring Yajnaseni here yourself. Our rivals are now under our control. They can do nothing." Having heard his brother, the prince[198] arose. His eyes were red with anger. He entered the house of those maharathas and told Princess Droupadi, "O Panchali! O Krishna! You have been won by us. Look upon Duryodhana without any shame. O one with eyes like long lotus petals! You will now love the Kurus. You have been won in accordance with dharma. Come to the sabha." She arose in great distress and wiped her pale face with her hands. In distress, she ran to where the aged king's,[199] who was a bull among the Kurus, women were. Swiftly the angry Duhshasana rushed at her, letting out a great roar. The long, blue and flowing hair belonged to the wife of a lord of men and was now grabbed by him. At the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice, the hair had been sprinkled with auspicious waters. The valour of the Pandavas was vanquished and Dhritarashtra's son[200] grabbed it with force. She had protectors, but was without a protector. Grabbing her by her long hair, Duhshasana pulled and dragged her to the sabha, like a plantain tree buffeted by the wind. When she was thus dragged, she bent down her body and softly whispered, "It is the period of my menses now. O evil-minded one! I am only clad in a single garment. O you who are not an arya! Do not take me to the sabha thus." But he forcibly grabbed her

by her black hair and told Krishna, “Pray to Krishna and Jishnu and Hari and Nara.[201] Cry out for help, but I will take you. O Yajnaseni! This may be the time of your menses. But whether you are clad in a single garment or in no garments at all, you have been won at the game and are now a slave. One can sport with a slave as one desires.” Her hair was dishevelled. As she was pulled around by Duhshasana, her half-garment had come loose. She burnt with shame and mortification. In a soft voice, Krishna whispered again, “There are those in the assembly hall who are learned in the sacred texts. They follow all the righteous rites and are all like Indra. All of them are my preceptors or like them. I cannot stand before them in this fashion. O performer of evil deeds! O you who act as if you are not an arya! Do not strip me and do not debase me in this fashion. Even if all the gods with Indra become your allies, these princes[202] will not pardon you. The great-souled son of Dharma[203] always bases himself in dharma. The ways of dharma are subtle and only the skilled can discern this. But despite the words of my lord,[204] I will not commit even a tiny offence or deviate from my own qualities. You are performing a most unworthy act by dragging me among the Kuru warriors when I am in my menses. There is no one here who will praise you for that, though there is no doubt that they have the same inclinations as you. Shame! The descendants of the Bharata lineage have lost their dharma and their knowledge of the ways of kshatriyas. All the Kurus in this sabha have witnessed the transgression of the dharma of the Kurus. There is certainly no longer substance in Drona, Bhishma and in this great-souled one.[205] The foremost among the elders of the Kuru lineage have chosen to ignore this terrible transgression of dharma by the king.” The slender-waisted one thus piteously cried out and cast a scornful and sidelong glance at her angry husbands. The Pandavas were inflamed by that sidelong glance and their bodies were filled with wrath. They didn’t suffer that much from the loss of the kingdom, or the riches, or the chief jewels, as they did from Krishna’s sidelong, angry and miserable glance. On seeing Krishna look at her miserable husbands, Duhshasana dragged her with even greater force, so that she almost lost her senses. He repeatedly called her “slave” and laughed uproariously. Karna was delighted at these words and approved of them by laughing out loudly. In similar fashion, Soubala, the king of Gandhara, applauded Duhshasana’s deed. Among all those who were present in the assembly hall, with the exception of these and Dhritarashtra’s son,[206] everyone was extremely miserable on seeing Krishna thus dragged into the sabha. Bhishma said, “O fortunate one! Since the ways of dharma are subtle, I cannot properly resolve the question you have posed. One without property cannot stake the property of others. But women are always the property of their husbands. Yudhishthira will abandon the entire earth with its riches before he gives up truth. The Pandava has himself said he has been won. Therefore, I cannot resolve this issue. Shakuni has no equal in dice. Kunti’s son has voluntarily played with him. The great-souled one does not

think he[207] has resorted to deceit. Therefore, I cannot answer the question.” Droupadi replied, “Though he is himself unskilled, the king was challenged in this sabha by those who are skilled, evil-minded and deceitful, those who love the game of dice. How can it be said he chose voluntarily? The pure-hearted and foremost one among the Kurus and the Pandavas was robbed of his senses by inclinations towards deceit. He has understood everything only after he has been won and after the gambling is over. In this assembly hall are Kurus who are the lords of their sons and daughters-in-law. Let all of them examine my words and answer my question in the appropriate way.” Thus spoke the one who was miserable and weeping, while glancing at her miserable husbands. Duhshasana spoke many harsh, unpleasant and rude words to her. Vrikodara watched her being dragged, while she was in her menses and with her upper garments dishevelled. She did not deserve this. In extreme distress, he uttered words of anger to Yudhishthira.’

286(61)

‘Bhima said, “O Yudhishthira! Gamblers have many courtesans in their country. But they are kind even towards those, and do not stake them in gambling. In the gamble, we have lost to our enemies the riches and other excellent objects that the King of Kashi brought, the gems and other gifts that the other lords of the earth brought, mounts, riches, armour, weapons, the kingdom and even ourselves. Because you are our lord, my anger was not excited at all this. But I think you committed a most improper act in staking Droupadi. She did not deserve this. After obtaining the Pandavas, this maiden is suffering this despicable and cruel oppression from the Kouravas only because of your act. O king! It is because of her that my anger descends on you. I will burn your hands. O Sahadeva! Bring the fire.”[208]

‘Arjuna said, “O Bhimasena! Never before have you uttered words like these. The cruel enemies have destroyed your pride in dharma. You should not make the desires of the enemy come true. Observe the supreme dharma. According to dharma, one should never cross one’s elder brother. The king was challenged and he followed the dharma of the kshatriyas. He gambled because of the desires of the enemy. That is our great deed.”

‘Bhimasena replied, “O Dhananjaya! Had I not known that he has not done it for himself, I would forcibly have grasped his hands and burnt them in the blazing fire.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing the Pandavas thus miserable and Panchali’s affliction, Dhritarashtra’s son Vikarna spoke these words.[209] “O kings! Answer the question posed by Yajnaseni. If we do not decide on the question, we will certainly go to hell. Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, the eldest among the Kurus, are here, but they do not say anything. Nor does the extremely intelligent Vidura. Nor does Bharadvaja’s son,[210] the preceptor to all of us. Nor does Kripa. Why don’t these best among brahmanas

answer the question? The lords of the earth have assembled here from all the directions. Let them forget their desire and their anger and speak according to their own thoughts. O kings! Reflect on the question that the beautiful Droupadi has repeatedly asked. Then answer as to which side of the issue you are on." Thus did Vikarna repeatedly speak to all those who were present in the assembly hall. But none of the lords of the earth present said anything, good or bad. Vikarna again spoke to all those lords of the earth. He rubbed his hands against each other, sighed and said, "O lords of the earth! O Kouravas! Whether you say anything or not, I will tell you what I think is right. O best of men! It has been said that addiction to hunting, drinking, gambling and sexual intercourse are the four vices of kings. The man who is addicted to these deviates from dharma and the world does not approve of these improper deeds. This son of Pandu[211] was addicted to vice and challenged by deceitful gamblers, staked Droupadi. The unblemished one is common to all the Pandavas. Having first lost himself, the Pandava offered her as stake. Soubala, desirous of a stake, suggested Krishna. Reflecting on all these, I do not think she has been won." On hearing these words, a great roar arose from all those who were in the sabha. They approved of Vikarna and censured Soubala. When the noise died down, Radheya, who was almost senseless with anger, gripped his lustrous arms[212] and uttered these words, "I have witnessed many distortions in Vikarna. Like fire destroys the block from which it has been kindled, his destruction will come from the fire he has created. Though urged by Krishna, those who are assembled here have not uttered a word. I consider that Drupada's daughter has been won in accordance with dharma, and so do they. O son of Dhritarashtra! Out of childishness, you alone are being torn to bits. Though but a child, you speak in this sabha what should be spoken by elders. O Duryodhana's younger brother! You do not know the reality of what dharma is. Like one with limited intelligence, you proclaim that Krishna has not been won, when she has been won. O Dhritarashtra's son! How can you think that Krishna has not been won? In this sabha, the eldest Pandava staked everything he possessed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Droupadi is included in all his possessions. When Krishna has been won in accordance with dharma, how can you think she has not been won? Droupadi was mentioned in the speech and the Pandava approved. According to what reason do you then think that she has not been won? If you think that bringing her into the sabha when she is clad in only a single garment is against dharma, listen to the words I have to say in response. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![213] It has been ordained by the gods that a woman should only have one husband. However, she submits to many and it is therefore certain that she is a courtesan. It is my view that there is nothing surprising in her being brought into the sabha in a single garment, or even if she is naked. In accordance with dharma, Soubala has won all the riches the Pandavas possessed, including her and themselves. O Duhshasana! This Vikarna is only a child, though he speaks words of wisdom. Strip

away the garments from the Pandavas and Droupadi." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing these words, the Pandavas took off their upper garments and sat down in the sabha. O king! Then Duhshasana forcibly tugged at Droupadi's garments. In front of everyone in the sabha, he forcibly pulled. O lord of the earth! As Droupadi's garment was being tugged away, another similar garment appeared every time.[214] At this, a terrible uproar arose. All the assembled kings witnessed the most extraordinary sight in the worlds and approved. In the midst of the kings, Bhima then kneaded his hands. His lips trembling with rage, he cursed in a loud voice, "O kshatriyas! O those who live in this world! Hear these words of mine, never before uttered by any man and never to be uttered in the future. O lords of the earth! Having uttered these words, if I do not act accordingly, may I never tread on the path followed by my forefathers. In battle, I will forcibly tear asunder the breast of this evil and misguided one,[215] wretch among the Bharatas, and drink his blood." On hearing these words, all the worlds were delighted. They worshipped him a lot and reviled Dhritarashtra's son. When that mass of garments was piled up in the middle of the sabha, Duhshasana became tired and ashamed and finally sat down. On seeing the sons of Kunti in that state, all the gods and men in the sabha raised cries of "shame", so that the hair on the body stood up. The people shouted, "The Kouravas do not answer the question," and censured Dhritarashtra. Then Vidura, learned in all the ways of dharma, raised his arms and silenced those who were in the assembly hall. He spoke these words, "Having raised the question, Droupadi now weeps, like one without a protector. If those who are in the sabha do not answer the question, dharma will be oppressed. Like a blazing fire, one in distress comes to this sabha. Those who are in the sabha pacify him through true dharma. When a man in distress asks a question about dharma, those in the sabha must answer that question, without being driven by desire or anger. O lords of men! Vikarna has answered the question in accordance with what he thinks. You should also answer the question as you deem fit. If one seated in the assembly hall does not answer the question, even though he knows about dharma, he incurs half the demerit that comes from lying. And if one is seated in the assembly hall and answers the question falsely, even though he knows about dharma, he certainly incurs the complete demerit that comes from lying. In this context, the learned ones quote the ancient conversation that took place between Prahlada and the sage who was the son of Angirasa."

'Vidura said, "Prahlada was the king of the daityas and his son was Virochana. For the sake of a maiden, he[216] quarrelled with Sudhanva, the son of Angirasa. We have heard that out of desire for the maiden, they wagered their lives, each claiming that he was superior. When they were thus debating, they asked Prahlada, 'Who among us is superior? Answer the question and do not lie.' He was scared of this dispute and looked at Sudhanva. As flaming as the curse of a brahmana, Sudhanva angrily told him, 'O Prahlada! If you utter a lie or if you do not answer at all, the wielder of the vajra will

use the vajra to splinter your head into a hundred parts.' When Sudhanva spoke these words, the daitya trembled like the leaf of a fig tree.[217] He went to the immensely energetic Kashyapa to consult him. Prahlada said, 'O illustrious one! You are learned in the ways of dharma, for the gods, the demons and the brahmanas. Listen to this problem and tell me what dharma is. Please tell me, because I am asking you. In the hereafter, what worlds are attained by one who does not answer a question or answers it falsely?' Kashyapa answered, 'He who knows the answer to a question but does not answer it out of desire, anger or fear, brings upon himself a thousand of Varuna's nooses. It takes an entire year for one of these nooses to be loosened. Therefore, one who knows the truth should speak the truth openly. When dharma is pierced with what is not dharma and goes to a sabha and those who are in the assembly hall do not take out the dart, it will pierce them. In a sabha where an act of censure is not condemned, half the demerit is attached to the head of that assembly, one fourth to the culprit and one fourth to those who do not condemn it. On the other hand, in a sabha where an act of censure is condemned, the head is free of sin and so are the ones assembled there, and demerit descends on the perpetrator. O Prahlada! Those who answer falsely to a question asked about dharma, destroy the merits of good deeds for seven generations of ancestors and seven generations of descendants. The grief of one whose property has been stolen, whose son has been killed, who has lost all in debt, who has been extorted by a king, or of a woman who has no husband, or of one distanced from his companions, or the misery of a co-wife, or of one deprived because of witnesses[218]—the lord of the thirty gods[219] has declared these miseries to be equal. He who speaks falsely obtains all these miseries. One becomes a witness because of what he has directly seen, heard or understood. Therefore, a witness who speaks the truth never deviates from dharma and artha.' Having heard Kashyapa's words, Prahlada spoke to his son. 'Sudhanva is superior to you, just as Angirasa is superior to me. Sudhanva's mother is superior to your mother. O Virochana! Sudhanva is the lord of your life.' Sudhanva replied, 'Since you have not deviated from dharma out of affection towards your son, I set your son free and he will live for a hundred years.' Hearing this about supreme dharma, let all those who are in this sabha reflect upon the supreme answer to Krishna's question."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Vidura's words, none of the kings uttered a single word. Karna told Duhshasana, "Take Krishna away to the quarters meant for the servant girls." The ascetic lady[220] was trembling, in shame and complained to the Pandavas, when Duhshasana dragged her in the middle of the sabha.'

287(62)

'Droupadi said, "I have a duty to perform, an act that I had not performed earlier, because dragged through the force of this powerful one, I had lost my senses. I offer my

homage to all my superiors who are in this assembly of Kurus. Let it not be my crime that I have not done this before."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Dragged with even greater force, the ascetic lady was even more miserable. She did not deserve this. She fell down on the ground and lamented in the sabha.

'Droupadi said, "The assembled kings set their eyes on me in the arena of the svayamvara. Until being brought to this sabha, I have never been seen by anyone since, anywhere. One who has earlier not seen the wind or the sun in her house, has today been seen by this assembly of Kurus in the middle of the sabha. Earlier, the Pandavas have not allowed the wind to touch me in my house. They now bear it when I am touched by this evil-hearted one. Time has deviated. The Kurus permit their daughter and daughter-in-law, unworthy of such treatment, to be thus oppressed. Earlier, it has been heard that pure and chaste wives are not brought into the middle of a sabha. Where is the dharma of the lords of the earth? According to dharma, it has earlier been heard that wives are not brought into an assembly hall. That earlier eternal dharma has been lost among the Kouravas. How is it that the chaste wife of the Pandus, the sister of Parshata's son[221] and a friend to Vasudeva, has been brought into this assembly of kings? O Kouravas! I am Dharmaraja's wife and I was born in the same varna as he. Tell me whether I am a slave or not a slave, and I will act accordingly. O Kouravas! This mean one, the bringer of ill repute to the Kouravas, is firmly molesting me and I cannot bear it any longer. O kings! O Kouravas! I want you to answer, whatever you might think, and I will act accordingly. Have I been won or have I not been won?"

'Bhishma replied, "O fortunate one! I have already said that the course of dharma is supreme. Even the great-souled brahmanas in this world are incapable of comprehending its course. When a powerful man uses force, that is perceived as dharma by the world. But if a feeble one speaks about dharma, that is not regarded as dharma by others. I am incapable of answering your question certainly. The issue is subtle, deep, complicated and important. It is certain that all the Kurus have become addicted to avarice and delusion. Without a doubt, the destruction of the lineage will occur soon. O fortunate one! The lineage into which you have been born and the one in which you are established as a daughter-in-law, never deviates from the path of dharma, regardless of the disaster that might befall. O Panchali! Since you look at dharma, even though you are suffering, it is conduct that you yourself follow. Drona and the other elders, knowledgeable in dharma, sit here with lowered heads, as if their bodies are hollow.[222] It is my view that Yudhishthira is the supreme authority on the question. He should himself say whether you have been won or have not been won."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The kings who were there were scared of Dhritarashtra's son. They said nothing, good or bad, though they witnessed these many events and saw her crying, like a female osprey that has been hurt. On seeing that the sons and grandsons

of the kings were silent, Dhritarashtra's son[223] smiled and spoke these words to the daughter of the king of Panchala, "O Yajnaseni! Let the question now be placed before the immensely powerful Bhima, Arjuna, Sahadeva and your husband Nakula. Let them reply to your words. O Panchali! Let them declare before all these aryas that Yudhishthira is not your lord. They must establish Dharmaraja as a liar.[224] You will then be freed from servitude. The great-souled son of Dharma is always established in dharma. He is the equal of Indra. Let him himself declare whether he is your lord or not. When he has spoken, you must quickly decide whom to love. All the Kouravas who are in this sabha are immersed in your affliction. Though they are aryas at heart, they cannot appropriately resolve the issue. They therefore look to your husbands for an answer." Hearing these words of the king of the Kurus, all those who were present in the assembly loudly applauded him. Some happily waved their garments. But sounds of "alas" were also heard. On hearing these pleasant words, all the kings in the assembly applauded the righteous act of the foremost among the Kurus. Turning their faces, all the kings looked at Yudhishthira. He was learned in the principles of dharma. What would he say? What would Bibhatsu, the Pandava who was undefeated in battle, say? What would Bhimasena and the twins say? They were curious and wondered. When the noise had died down, Bhimasena grasped his large arms, smeared with sandalwood paste, and spoke. "Had Dharmaraja Yudhishthira not been our superior and had he not been our lord of our lineage, we would not have tolerated this. He owns the merit of our austerities and he is even the lord of our lives. If he considers himself to have been won, then all of us have been won. But for that, no one who walks the ground of the earth with his feet would have escaped with his life after touching Panchali's hair. Look at my long and round arms, like iron clubs. Once inside them, not even Shatakratu can escape. But bound in the noose of dharma, out of respect for him[225] and restrained by Arjuna, I am not doing anything dreadful. If I am once freed by Dharmaraja, I will make my arms perform the act of swords and kill these evil sons of Dhritarashtra, the way a lion kills small animals." At that, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura spoke and said, "Restrain yourself. With you, everything is possible."'

288(63)

'Karna said, "There are three who can own no property—a slave, a student and a woman. O fortunate one! You are the wife of a slave and have nothing of your own. You have no lord and are like the property of slaves. Enter[226] and serve us. That is the task for you in this household. O Princess! All the sons of Dhritarashtra are now your masters and not the sons of Pritha. O beautiful one! Choose another one for your husband, one who will not make you a slave through gambling. Remember the eternal rule among slaves. Sexual acts with one's masters are never censured. Nakula,

Bhimasena, Yudhishthira, Sahadeva and Arjuna have been won over. O Yajnaseni! Enter as a slave. The ones who have been won over can no longer be your husbands. Valour and virility are of no use to Partha[227] now. In the middle of the sabha, he has gambled away the daughter of Drupada, the king of Panchala."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, Bhimasena couldn't bear it any more. Like a man tormented, he breathed deeply. But he was devoted to the king[228] and tied down in the noose of dharma. He tried to burn him[229] down with the anger in his eye. Bhima said, "I cannot be angry at the words of the son of a suta.[230] It is truly the case that the dharma of slaves is upon us. O lord of men![231] Our enemies would not have dared hold me down, had you not staked her." Hearing Radheya's words, King Duryodhana then spoke to Yudhishthira, who sat silent, as if he had lost his senses. "O king! Bhima, Arjuna and the twins always follow your instructions. Answer the question as to whether you think Krishna has been won." Having thus spoken to Kounteya, he became insolent with arrogance. He looked invitingly at Panchali and grasped his garment. Smiling at Radheya and tormenting Bhima, he exposed his left thigh to Droupadi, who was looking at him.[232] It was like the stem of a plantain tree, like the trunk of an elephant, as proud as the vajra and was marked with all the auspicious signs. On witnessing this, Vrikodara enlarged his red eyes. Among all the kings in the sabha, he spoke to them in compelling words. "If he fails to break that thigh with a club in a great battle, let Vrikodara not go to the worlds where his ancestors have gone." When he was thus enraged, sparks of fire issued out of every opening in his body, as if from the hollow of a tree that is on fire.

'Vidura said, "O kings! Look out for the extreme danger that emanates from Bhimasena. Watch, for this is like Varuna's noose. The great calamity that the gods had destined for the descendants of the Bharata lineage in ancient times, has come to pass. Dhritarashtra's sons have transgressed in gambling. They are now quarrelling about a lady in a sabha. There is great danger to what you have already obtained and what you wish to obtain.[233] The counsel of the Kurus is now based on evil advice. O Kurus! Know this to be dharma. If it is wrongly diagnosed, this entire assembly will be tainted. If this gambler had staked her before, he would not have been won and would have still been her master. But if a man puts up a stake when he is not the lord of anything, winning that stake is like obtaining riches in a dream. O Kurus! You have listened to Gandhari's son![234] But do not deviate from the path of dharma."

'Duryodhana responded, "I am willing to abide by Bhima's words, Arjuna's words and the words of the twins. O Yanjanseni! If they say that Yudhishthira wasn't their lord, then you will be freed from slavery."

'Arjuna said, "This great-souled King Dharmaraja, Kunti's son, was certainly our master when he first played with us as stake. But whose lord was he, once he had lost

himself? O assembled Kurus! All of you should decide that."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At that time, in King Dhritarashtra's house, a jackal cried at the agnihotra.[235] O king! Donkeys brayed in response and from every direction, terrible birds joined in. Vidura, who was knowledgeable in everything, heard these terrible sounds, and so did Subala's daughter.[236] Bhishma, Drona and the learned Goutama[237] heard and said, "Peace! Peace!" On hearing those terrible omens, Gandhari and the learned Vidura became miserable and told the king.[238] Then the king spoke these words. "O evil-minded Duryodhana! You have been destroyed. In this assembly hall of the bulls among the Kurus, in this sabha, you have used insolent words against a woman, especially a lawfully wedded wife like Droupadi." Having spoken these words, the intelligent Dhritarashtra stopped, for he was concerned about the welfare of his relatives. Using his knowledge and intelligence, he spoke these words, so as to pacify Krishna Panchali.

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Panchali! Choose from me whatever boon you desire. You are a chaste lady who follows supreme dharma and you are the most special of my daughters-in-law."

'Droupadi replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you wish to grant me a boon, I will choose this. The illustrious Yudhishthira, who follows all the ways of dharma, should not be a slave. Let these young boys, who do not know of Prativindhya's[239] intelligence, refer to him as the son of a slave when he arrives. He has been the son of a king earlier, like no man anywhere and ever. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He will die if he is brought up as the son of a slave."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O fortunate one! Ask for a second boon from me and I will grant it to you. My heart has convinced me that you do not deserve to obtain only a single boon."

'Droupadi replied, "With my second boon, I desire that Bhimasena, Dhananjaya, Nakula and Sahadeva, together with their chariots and their bows, should not be slaves."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O one who always follows the path of righteousness! Two boons do not honour you enough. Ask for a third. You are the best among all my daughters-in-law."

'Droupadi replied, "O illustrious one! Avarice destroys dharma and I am disinclined. O supreme among kings! I am not deserving of a third boon from you. It is said that the vaishya has one boon and a kshatriya and his wife can have two. O Indra among kings! A king can have three boons and a brahmana one hundred. O king! My husbands were reduced to an evil state, but have been rescued. They will obtain riches and prosperity through their own sacred deeds."'

289(64)

‘Karna said, “Among all women in humankind, renowned for their beauty, we have not seen, nor heard, of the accomplishment of such a deed. When the sons of Pritha and the sons of Dhritarashtra were raging in anger, Krishna Droupadi brought solace. The sons of Pandu were immersed and drowning in an ocean without a boat. Panchali became their boat and brought them safely ashore.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words that a woman had become the salvation for the sons of Pandu, Bhimasena was extremely hurt. In the midst of the Kurus, he said unhappily, “Devala[240] has said that there are three stars[241] for a man—offspring, deeds and learning, since these are the source of creation. When the body has lost life and is hollow and impure, discarded by relatives, these are the three that survive. But our light has become dark, because our wife has been humiliated. O Dhananjaya! How can offspring from a defiled one serve any purpose?” Arjuna replied, “The Bharatas do not talk about words from inferior men, uttered or not uttered. They only converse about those from superior men. They remember good deeds and not enmity that has been shown. They know only the good because they have confidence in their own selves.” Bhima said, “Right now, I will kill all the enemies who have assembled here. O Indra among kings![242] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shall I tear them up by their roots? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Where is the need to debate this or suffer? Here and now, I am going to kill all of them and you can rule the earth without a rival.” Having said this, Bhimasena, surrounded by his younger brothers, glanced at his club, like a lion in the midst of deer. Partha,[243] whose deeds are unblemished, pacified him and cooled him. But the mighty-armed and valorous one streamed with anger. O lord of men! He was so angry that smoke, sparks and flaming fire issued from his ears and other openings in his body. His brows were furrowed and his face was terrible to behold, like Yama’s form when destruction at the end of a yuga is near. ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira restrained the mighty-armed one with his arms. He told him not to act in this way and to be quiet. Having restrained the mighty-armed one, whose eyes were red with anger, Yudhishthira approached his father Dhritarashtra, his hands joined in salutation.’

290(65)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! You are our lord. Command us as to what we should do. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have always desired to be established under your rule.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “O Ajatashatru! Be fortunate. Go in peace and safety. On my instructions, rule your kingdom with your riches. But bear in mind the instructions that I, an old man, am giving. I have reflected on this and it is the supreme medication[244] for welfare. O Yudhishthira! O son! You know the subtle path of dharma. You are

humble, immensely wise and serve your superiors. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Where there is intelligence, there is peace. Therefore, tread the path of serenity. A weapon does not cut what is not wood. But it does cut wood. Supreme men do not indulge in hostilities. They do not know enmity and see good qualities, leaving out bad qualities. O Yudhishthira! It is only the worst among men who use harsh words in a quarrel. Those who are average reply to such words, but the supreme among men never respond. Supreme men never converse about ill words, whether they are uttered or not uttered by inferior men.[245] They only remember good deeds and not deeds resulting from enmity. They only know the good because they have confidence in their own selves. In this assembly of good people, you have shown the character of an arya. O son! Do not take to your heart Duryodhana's harshness. Look at your mother Gandhari and me. We crave for your good qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Look at your old and blind father present before you. I wished to see my friends and judge the strengths and weaknesses of my sons. It was from this desire that I had earlier allowed the gambling match to take place. O king! There is no reason to feel sorry for the Kurus whom you rule. The intelligent Vidura, knowledgeable in all the sacred texts, is your adviser. There is dharma in you, valour in Arjuna, strength in Bhimasena and respect and service towards superior in the twins, foremost among men. O Ajatashatru! Be fortunate. Return to Khandavaprastha. Let there be fraternal love with your brothers.[246] May your mind always be established in dharma."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing these words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, supreme among those of the Bharata lineage, performed all the deeds that were appropriate for the occasion and left with his brothers. With Krishna,[247] they left in chariots that were like the clouds. In a happy frame of mind, they left for Indraprastha, supreme among cities.'

Section Twenty-Eight

Anudyuta Parva

This sections has 232 shlokas and seven chapters.

Chapter 291(66): 37 shlokas
Chapter 292(67): 21 shlokas
Chapter 293(68): 46 shlokas
Chapter 294(69): 21 shlokas
Chapter 295(70): 24 shlokas
Chapter 296(71): 47 shlokas
Chapter 297(72): 36 shlokas

As has been mentioned in the earlier section, the word dyuta means playing or gambling with dice, and also the resultant prize. The word anu *means after, behind, or in consequence of. So this section is about the aftermath of the gambling match.*

291(66)

Janamejaya asked, 'When they learnt that the Pandavas had been granted permission to leave with their gems, riches and treasures, what was the state of mind of Dhritarashtra's sons?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! When he found out that the intelligent Dhritarashtra had given the permission, Duhshasana swiftly went to his brother.[1] O bull among the Bharata lineage! On arriving before Duryodhana and his advisers, the foremost of the Bharatas[2] spoke these miserable words, "O maharathas! That old man has made us lose everything that we had obtained with great difficulty. He has given those objects to our enemies." Then the proud Duryodhana, Karna and Soubala Shakuni got together and plotted against the Pandavas. They went to the intelligent King Dhritarashtra, Vichitravirya's son, and spoke to him these conciliatory words.

'Duryodhana said, "O king! Have you not heard what Brihaspati, the learned priest of the gods, told Shakra about policy? 'O destroyer of enemies! Enemies must be killed through every means possible, before they cause harm through war or force.'[3] We should offer homage to all the kings through riches obtained from the Pandavas. If we fight with them[4] thereafter, what reversal can befall us? If one places angry and venomous snakes that bring destruction on one's back and neck, how can one get rid of them? O father! The angry Pandavas will ride on chariots and hold their weapons. In their rage, they will destroy us like venomous serpents. Arjuna is attired in armour and has grasped his two supreme quivers. He is frequently picking up the Gandiva, breathing heavily and glancing around. We have heard that Vrikodara has swiftly raised

his giant club and is riding on a chariot that has been yoked. Nakula has his sword and the shield marked with the signs of eight moons. Sahadeva and the king[5] have made their intentions clear through their gestures. They have ascended chariots that are stocked with many different kinds of arms. They have whipped up the teams of chariots and are ready to employ armies. We have caused them offence and they will not pardon us. Who among them will forgive Droupadi's oppression? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Be fortunate. We must again gamble with the Pandavas so as to send them to the forest. In this way, we will be able to bring them under our sway. Either they or we will be defeated in the gambling with dice and attired in deerskin, will enter the great forest for twelve years. The thirteenth year will have to be spent in an inhabited place, in disguise. If one is recognized, one will again have to go to the forest for twelve years. Either they or we will live here. Therefore, let the gamble begin. Let the dice be thrown again and let the Pandavas play. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the most important task for us. This Shakuni is skilled and possesses all the knowledge about the secrets of dice. We will be firmly established in the kingdom and will have alliances. We will gather a vast, brave and invincible army and keep it content. O king! O scorcher of enemies! If they survive the vow after thirteen years, we will be able to defeat them. Let this find pleasure with you."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "Then immediately bring them back, even if they have gone a long distance away. Let the Pandavas return and gamble with the dice again."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Drona, Somadatta, the maharatha Bahlika, Vidura, Drona's son,[6] the valorous son of the vaishya,[7] Bhurishrava, Shantanu's son[8] and maharatha Vikarna collectively said, "Don't have the gamble. Let there be peace." But Dhritarashtra loved his son and ignored the desires of these well-wishers, all of whom could foresee the consequences. He summoned the Pandavas. O great king! Gandhari was always united with dharma. She was miserable because of affection towards her sons and spoke to Dhritarashtra, lord of the people. "When Duryodhana was born, the immensely intelligent Kshatta[9] told us that it would be better to send this destroyer of the lineage to the other world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as he was born, he howled like a jackal. O Kurus! Listen to this. He will be the destroyer of the lineage. O lord! Do not listen to the views of these wicked ones who are nothing but children. Do not become the cause for the terrible destruction of the lineage. Who will breach a dam[10] that has been constructed? Who will rekindle a dying fire? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons of Pritha are now established in peace. Who would want to anger them? O Ajamidha![11] You remember, but I am reminding you again. Either in good or in evil deeds, the sacred texts cannot instruct those who are evil in intelligence. O king! Nor will one with the intelligence of a child ever attain the wisdom of age. You should yourself be the leader to your sons. Let them not be torn

apart from you. Let peace, dharma, the counsel of others and natural intelligence be your principles in framing policy. Prosperity built through cruelty is destroyed. If it is gently nurtured, it grows old and passes to sons and grandsons." Having been thus addressed by Gandhari, who had seen the way of dharma, the great king replied, "It is certain that if the destruction of our lineage has come, I will not be able to prevent it. Let it be as they wish. Let the Pandavas return. Let those who are mine gamble again with the Pandavas."'

292(67)

Vaishampayana said, 'On the intelligent King Dhritarashtra's command, a Pratikamin spoke to Partha Yudhishthira, who had already gone a long distance away. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your father has said that the sabha has been covered with carpets. O king! O Pandava! The dice are ready. Come and play." Yudhishthira replied, "Following the decisions of the creator, all beings attain good and evil. Even if I do not play again, neither can be prevented. This summon to gamble with the dice is the old one's[12] command. Though I know that it will lead to ruin, I cannot disobey the command." Having uttered these words, the Pandava returned with his brothers. Though he knew Shakuni's resort to maya, Partha returned to gamble. Paining the hearts of their well-wishers, those maharathas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, again entered the sabha. They once again seated themselves, ready to gamble, ordained by destiny in the destruction of all the worlds.

'Shakuni said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! The old one returned all your riches and I worship him for that. But listen to me, because there is one more stake with great riches. If we are defeated by you in gambling, we will enter the great forest for twelve years. We will wear the skins of ruru deer and spend a thirteenth year in disguise, but in inhabited places. If recognized, we will return to the forest for another twelve years. But if you are defeated by us, together with Krishna, you will live in the forest for twelve years, clad in deerskin. When the thirteenth year is over, as is proper, each will obtain his own kingdom back. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With this stake, let us ready the dice and play another gamble with us."

'Those who were in the sabha said, "Alas! Why can't his[13] relatives make him understand the great danger? The intelligent can understand this. But the bulls among the Bharatas do not understand it."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Partha, lord of men, heard the remarks of the people. But from shame and from his sense of dharma, again began to play with dice. The immensely intelligent one knew, but returned to the game, thinking about whether this would lead to the destruction of the Kurus. Yudhishthira said, "I am a king who always follows his own dharma. How can I not return when challenged? O Shakuni! I will play with you." Shakuni replied, "O Pandavas! Ignore cattle, horses, many milch cows, innumerable

sheep and goats, elephants, treasuries, gold and all the female and male slaves. There is a single stake of exile in the forest. Whether you or we lose, we will live in the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the stake with which we will play. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is one throw of the dice for a life in the forest." Partha accepted the challenge and Soubala gathered the dice. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, "I have won."'

293(68)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been defeated, the sons of Pritha began to prepare for exile in the forest. One after another, they dressed themselves in deerskins and upper garments. Those destroyers of enemies had lost their kingdom and were attired in deerskin. On seeing them ready to leave for the forest, Duhshasana said, "The wheel has now begun to turn for the great-souled king, Dhritarashtra's son. The Pandavas have been vanquished and have attained supreme misery. Today, the gods have come to us along their smooth celestial routes. We have become elders to our enemies in qualities, their elders and more numerous than they are. The Pandavas have descended into hell for a long time, for eternity. They have fallen from happiness and have lost their kingdom, destroyed for an eternity. The Pandavas were intoxicated with their strength and laughed at the sons of Dhritarashtra. They have been defeated and have lost their riches. They must go to the forest. They have to give up their multicoloured armour and their divine and radiant garments. All of them must now put on the skins of ruru deer. They have accepted the stake that Soubala offered. Their minds were always nourished by the thought that there were no men like them in the world. But today, the Pandavas will know themselves in adversity, like sesame seeds that are barren. O Kourava![14] Your stay will not be like that of great-minded ones.[15] The deerskins of the powerful Pandavas have not been consecrated.[16] Yajnasena was the immensely intelligent descendant of Somaka. He gave his daughter Panchali to the Pandavas. That was not a deed well done, because the Parthas, husbands of Yajnaseni, are impotent. O Yajnaseni! What pleasure will you derive, since those dressed in fine garments are now reduced to deerskins in the forest, without riches and without homes? Choose a husband who will bring you pleasure. All the Kurus who are assembled here are forbearing and self-controlled and have no dearth of riches. Choose one of them as your husband, so that you do not suffer from this change in fortune. All the Pandavas are now like sesame seeds without kernels, or deer that only have skin on them. They are like barren corn. Why do you show homage to the Pandavas who have fallen? Serving sterile sesame seeds is a waste of labour." Dhritarashtra's son uttered these cruel and harsh words in the hearing of the Parthas.

'Having heard these words, the impetuous Bhimasena suppressed his anger. Like a

Himalayan lion dashing at a jackal, he suddenly approached him[17] and loudly rebuked him. "O cruel and evil one! You utter words that lead to failure. You are boasting among these kings because of the skills of Gandhara.[18] Just as your words pierce our hearts like arrows, I will make you remember all this when I pierce your heart in battle. I will send to Yama's abode all those who are your followers and protectors because of desire and avarice, together with all their relatives." Clad in his deerskin, Bhima uttered these angry words. But though immersed in grief, he stuck to the path of dharma. The other one[19] had no shame. He danced around in the middle of the Kurus and challenged him,[20] calling him a cow. Bhimasena said, "O Duhshasana! Cruel, harsh and rough words are possible for you. Who else will boast of riches obtained through deceit? If he does not rip apart your breast and drink your blood in battle, Partha Vrikodara will not go to the worlds attained by those with good deeds. In front of all the archers, I will kill the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle. I tell you truthfully that it is only after this that I will go to the abode of peace." When the Pandavas were leaving the sabha, the evil king Duryodhana, in play and delight, sought to mimic through his own steps Bhimasena's leonine gait. At that, Vrikodara half-turned his body towards him and said, "O stupid one! This will not make you successful. I will soon kill you, with your relatives, and give you my response by reminding you of this." The powerful and proud Bhima witnessed this insult to himself, but controlled his anger. Following the king[21] in the assembly of Kurus, he spoke these words and went out, "I will be the slayer of Duryodhana. Dhananjaya will be the slayer of Karna. Sahadeva will kill Shakuni, the deceitful one with the dice. In the midst of this sabha, I will once again utter the words of grave and solemn import. The gods will surely make this true when there is a war between us. I will kill Suyodhana[22] with a club in battle. I will press down his head on the ground with my foot. As for this evil-hearted and cruel Duhshasana, whose valour is in his words, I will drink his blood like the king of deer."[23]

'Arjuna said, "The truthful Bhima's resolutions are not known only in words. In the fourteenth year, what is going to occur will be witnessed. The earth will drink the blood of Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-hearted Shakuni and Duhshasana, as the fourth. O Bhimasena! On your instructions, I will kill in battle this jealous Karna, who uses his eloquence to praise the wicked." For giving pleasure to Bhima, this is what Arjuna swears. "In battle, I will kill Karna and Karna's followers with my arrows. With my sharp arrows, I will send to Yama's abode all those other kings who will fight with me out of their folly. Let the Himalayas move from where they are established, let the sun be dimmed, let coolness be destroyed from the moon, if I deviate from this vow. In the fourteenth year, if Duryodhana does not restore the kingdom to us with proper honour, all this will certainly happen."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When Partha said this, Sahadeva, Madri's handsome and

powerful son, grasped his own large arms. His eyes were red with anger and he sighed like a serpent. Desiring to kill Soubala, he uttered these words. "O foolish one! O destroyer of the fame of Gandhara! What you thought were dice are not dice, but sharp arrows that you have invited in battle. For you and your relatives, I will certainly accomplish what Bhima has said. I will do what I have to do and you can do everything that you wish to do. O Soubala! I will overpower you and swiftly kill you in battle with your relatives, if you stay and fight in accordance with the dharma of the kshatriyas." O lord of the world! On hearing Sahadeva's words, Nakula, the most handsome among men, uttered his words, "At this gambling match, Dhritarashtra's sons have used harsh and insulting words towards Yajnaseni, so as to bring pleasure to Duryodhana. These sons of Dhritarashtra are evil and summoned by destiny, are soon to die. In their great numbers, I will show them the abode of Vaivasvata.[24] On Dharmaraja's instructions and following Droupadi's footsteps, I will soon relieve the earth of the sons of Dhritarashtra." Having extended their arms to take these many oaths, all these tigers among men went to Dhritarashtra.'

294(69)

'Yudhishthira said, "I bid farewell to all the descendants of the Bharata lineage, my old grandfather,[25] King Somadatta and the great king Bahlika. And to Drona, Kripa, all the other kings, Ashvatthama, Vidura, Dhritarashtra and to all of Dhritarashtra's sons. And to Yuyutsu,[26] Sanjaya and all the others who are in this assembly. I am bidding farewell to all of you before I go. I will no doubt see you again on my return."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Out of shame, the righteous ones who were there could not say a word to Yudhishthira. But in their minds, they wished for the welfare of the intelligent one.

'Vidura said, "Arya Pritha[27] is a princess. She should not go to the forest. She is delicate and old and has always been used to comfort. The illustrious one will remain in my house and be shown proper homage. O Parthas! Know this. And may you have welfare in every way. O Yudhishthira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know this to be my view that one who has been vanquished against dharma, never suffers from that defeat. You know dharma. Dhananjaya is knowledgeable in war. Bhimasena is the slayer of enemies. Nakula is one who collects wealth. Sahadeva is the one who administers. Dhoumya is supreme among those who know the brahman. Droupadi always follows the path of dharma and is skilled in the ways of dharma and artha. You love one another and always have kind words for each other. Because you are satisfied, you cannot be divided by enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This tranquillity brings welfare of every kind. No enemy can attack it, even if he is the equal of Shakra. In ancient times, when you lived in the Himalayas, Meru-Savarni[28]

instructed you. So did Krishna Dvaipayana in the city of Varanavata, Rama[29] on the peak of Mount Bhrigu and Shambhu[30] by the Drishadvati.[31] Near Anjana, you have heard maharshi Asita. Dhoumya is your priest and there is Narada, who is always a witness. Do not give up the insight and intelligence that the rishis show homage to. O Pandava![32] With your intelligence you surpass Pururava, the son of Ila; with your strength you surpass the other kings; and in your service of dharma, you surpass the rishis. Set your minds on victory with Indra's resolution, Yama's control over anger, Kubera's charity and Varuna's self-control. In giving up one's self, you are like the moon. Obtain the sustenance of life from the water, forbearance from the earth, energy from the sun's disc and strength from the wind. Know that your own prosperity is due to the elements. May you be fortunate. May you be free from disease. I will see you return. O Yudhishthira! May you always act properly in all your deeds, in accordance with the principles of dharma and artha for times of calamity and distress. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I give you leave to depart. May you find what is good for you. I will see you again when you return, successful and content."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus addressed, the Pandava, whose valour was his truth, replied, "Thus shall it be." Bowing to Bhishma and Drona, Yudhishthira went away.'

295(70)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then, when she was ready to depart, in extreme grief, Krishna went to the famous Pritha and took her leave from her and the other ladies who were there. She paid her respects and showed homage to each, as each deserved, and then got ready to go. At that, great lamentations were heard from the inner quarters of the Pandavas. Kunti was extremely miserable on seeing that Droupadi was about to leave. She uttered these words, in a voice that was choked with grief. "O child! Do not grieve because of this great calamity that has befallen you. You know very well the dharma for women and you also possess good character and conduct. O one with the sweet smiles! I need not instruct you about the duties towards your husbands. Two families[33] have been graced by your qualities and righteous conduct. The Kurus in the assembly hall are fortunate that they have not been burnt down by your rage. O unblemished one! Blessed by my thoughts about you, travel on a route that has no difficulties. The minds of good women are not distorted by what is inevitable. You are protected by the dharma of your superiors and you will swiftly obtain prosperity. When you live in the forest, always keep an eye on my son, Sahadeva, so that his mind does not sink under this great calamity that has come." The queen[34] replied, "So shall it be." She went out, her hair undone, in a single garment that was stained with blood and marked with her flowing tears.[35]

'As she wept and left, Pritha followed her, in grief. She saw all her sons, deprived of

their ornaments and garments. Their bodies were covered in the skins of ruru deer and their faces were lowered in shame. They were surrounded by delighted enemies and mourning well-wishers. Driven by affection, she approached all her sons in that state. In words of great lamentation, she spoke to them and their relatives. “You have always followed good dharma. You have always been adorned by fortitude in conduct. You have never been mean. You have always been firm and devoted. You have always been respectful of the gods. Why should this calamity befall you? Why should there be this reversal in fortune? I do not see whose envy and wickedness have led to this. Because I have given birth to you, all this may be because of my ill fortune. So despite possessing supreme qualities, you are suffering the oppression of limitless grief. You do not lack in valour, strength, courage, energy and fortitude. But thin of body, and deprived of your riches, how will you live in that desolate forest? If I had known that you were destined to live in the forest, after Pandu’s death, I would not have brought you down from the Shatashringa Mountains to Gajasahrya.[36] I think your father was fortunate. His mind was set on austerities and wisdom. His mind was set on going to heaven before he encountered misery because of his sons. I think that Madri, knowledgeable in dharma and virtuous in every way, was fortunate. She had the foresight of knowing what was going to happen and attained supreme salvation. Love and thoughts and purpose determined my decision. Alas on my love for life. I suffer all this misery because of that.” When Kunti lamented in this way, the Pandavas comforted her and showed her homage. Unhappily, they then set out for the forest. Vidura and the others, who were themselves aggrieved, consoled the afflicted Kunti. Explaining the reasons, and thus suffering even more, they slowly led her to Kshatta’s[37] house. King Dhritarashtra’s mind was immersed in grief. He asked Kshatta to come to him at once. So Vidura went to Dhritarashtra’s house. In great anxiety, Dhritarashtra, lord of men, questioned him.’

296(71)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “How is Kounteya Dharmaraja Yudhishthira leaving? How about Bhimasena, Savyasachi and the two sons of Madri? O Kshatta! How about Dhoumya and the ascetic Droupadi? I wish to hear everything. Describe to me every act of theirs.”[38]

‘Vidura replied, “Kunti’s son Yudhishthira is departing, covering his face with his garment. Pandava Bhima is spreading his long arms, as he goes. Savyasachi is following the king,[39] scattering sand. Madri’s son Sahadeva has smeared his face, as he goes. Nakula, the most handsome man in this world, follows the king. His mind is despondent and he has smeared his entire body with dust. The large-eyed and beautiful Krishna follows the king. She is weeping and has covered her face with her hair. O lord of the earth! Dhoumya is chanting terrible sama hymns connected with Yama and as he treads the path, he is holding kusa grass in his hand.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “The Pandavas are going in many different forms. O Vidura! Please tell me why they are going in these different ways.”

‘Vidura replied, “Though your sons robbed him of his kingdom and his riches through deceit, the mind of the intelligent Dharmaraja does not deviate from dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This king is always kind to the sons of Dhritarashtra. Though he has been deprived through deceit, he refuses to open his eyes in anger. ‘I will burn these people down if I look at them through my terrible eyes.’ Thinking this, the Pandava king goes with his face covered. Now listen to me, as I tell you why Bhima is going in this way. O bull among the Bharata lineage! ‘There is no one equal to me in strength of arms.’ Knowing this, Bhima spreads his long arms as he goes. Proud of the strength of his arms, he displays his arms. He wishes to perform acts on the enemy that do justice to those arms. Kunti’s son Arjuna is capable of using both arms to shower arrows. Savyasachi follows the king, scattering sand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Just as he scatters sand, in that fashion, he will release showers of arrows on his enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! ‘Let no one recognize my face today.’ Thinking this, Sahadeva travels with a smeared face. ‘Along the route, I may steal the hearts of women who look at me.’ Thinking this, Nakula travels with his entire body covered in dust. Droupadi is attired in a single garment. She is weeping and she is in her menses. Her hair has not been braided and her garment is smeared with blood. She has spoken these words. ‘In the fourteenth year, the wives of those who have caused my present plight, will find their husbands dead, their sons dead, their relatives dead and their beloved ones dead. Their bodies will be covered with the blood of their relatives. Their hair will not be braided and they will be in their menses. It is only after offering water to the dead that those aryas[40] will enter Gajasahrya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhoumya is the self-controlled priest. He is chanting sama hymns connected with Yama and is leading them from the front, towards the south-west. He holds *darbha* grass.[41] ‘When the descendants of the Bharata lineage have been killed in battle, the elders of the Kuru clan will chant these sama hymns.’ Dhoumya is proceeding with these words. ‘Alas! Alas! Our lords are leaving. Witness this great misery.’ This is what the miserable citizens are saying in every direction. The intelligent Kounteyas are leaving for the forest in this fashion, indicating through these signs and marks the resolutions that exist in their hearts. As those foremost among men are leaving Gajasahrya, lightning is flashing in the cloudless sky and the earth is trembling. O lord of the earth! Rahu has swallowed the sun, though this is not the time of *parvani*.[42] Meteors are descending throughout the city. Predatory animals are screaming, together with vultures, jackals and crows, in the temples of the gods, in sanctuaries and from the tops of walls and houses. O king! These are the great and terrible portents as the Pandavas leave for the forest. They indicate the doom of the Bharatas, since you have acted in accordance with evil counsel.”’

Vaishampayana said, 'Narada now appeared in the sabha and stood before the Kurus. He was surrounded by maharshis and spoke these terrible words, "In the fourteenth year from now, because of Duryodhana's crime and through the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, the Kouravas who are here will be destroyed." Having uttered these words, the supreme of devarshis, graced with the great prosperity of the brahman, arose to the sky and swiftly disappeared.

'At this, Duryodhana, Karna and Soubala Shakuni thought that Drona would be their refuge and offered him the kingdom.[43] Drona spoke these words to the evil Duryodhana, Duhshasana, Karna and all the other Bharatas. "The brahmanas have said that the Pandavas, sons of the gods, should not be killed.[44] But with all my strength, I will do whatever I can for those who seek refuge with me. With all their hearts and devotion, the sons of Dhritarashtra and their king have come to me and I cannot abandon them. Destiny is always supreme. In accordance with dharma, the sons of Pandu have been defeated and have left for the forest. The Kouravas will live in the forest for twelve years. They will practise brahmacharya. But since they will fall prey to anger and intolerance, the Pandavas will return with enmity and be the cause of great grief to me. In a feud over friendship, I once dislodged Drupada from his kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![45] In his anger, he performed a sacrifice to obtain a son who would kill me. Through the austerities of Yaja and Upayaja,[46] he obtained a son named Dhrishtadyumna from the fire and the slender-waisted Droupadi from the middle of the altar. He[47] was given by the gods and has radiance like that of the fire. He was born with bow, arrows and armour. Since I am subject to the dharma of earth, I am possessed by great fear for him. This son of Prishata,[48] a bull among men, is now on their side. There will be great fear to my life if I ever have to battle him. He is famous in the world because it has been heard that he will kill me. Because of your deed, that time of destruction has arrived. Therefore, without any loss of time, do what is best for you. This happiness will last for a short time, like the shade of a palm tree in the winter. Perform great sacrifices, enjoy your pleasures and donate. In the fourteenth year, a great calamity will befall you. O Duryodhana! Depending on your inclinations, you have heard or understood. If you so desire, use pacification with the Pandavas." On hearing Drona's words, Dhritarashtra said, "O Kshatta![49] What the preceptor[50] has said is true. Go back to the Pandavas. If they do not return, offer respect to the Pandavas. Let these fortunate sons go with arms, chariots and infantry."'[51]

297(72)

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When the Parthas were defeated in gambling with the dice and had left for the forest, Dhritarashtra began to worry a lot. Dhritarashtra,

lord of the people, was seated, worrying, sighing and with his mind distracted. At that time, Sanjaya[52] told him, "O lord of the earth! You have obtained the entire earth, with all its riches. O king! The Pandavas have left from the kingdom. Why are you grieving?" Dhritarashtra replied, "The maharatha Pandavas are terrible in battle and have allies. Knowing that the enmity will occur, should one not sorrow?" Sanjaya said, "O king! This great enmity is the consequence of your great deed. There will be complete destruction of the entire world and all the relatives. Though restrained by Bhishma, Drona and Vidura, your shameless and evil-minded son Duryodhana sent the Pratikamin, the son of a suta, to bring the Pandavas' beloved wife Droupadi, the follower of dharma."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "When the gods wish to defeat a man, they first take his intelligence away, so that his vision becomes distorted. When destruction is nigh and intelligence is clouded, an improper course of action appears as the proper course of action and sticks to the heart. That which is evil appears in the form of that which is good and that which is good appears in the form of that which is evil. When destruction is near, they appear thus and one is content. Destiny does not arrive with a club and strike one on the head with it. The strength of time is that it makes the opposite seem to be right. By dragging the ascetic Panchali into the middle of the sabha, those evil ones have caused this terrible calamity that makes the hair on the body stand up. She is beautiful and she is not born from a womb.[53] She has been born from the fire. She is illustrious and is knowledgeable in all dharma. Who but a deceitful gambler[54] could overpower her and drag her into the middle of an assembly hall? Following the dharma of women,[55] the one with the beautiful hips was covered in blood. Panchali was in single garment. She looked at the Pandavas, robbed of their riches, deprived of their thoughts, robbed of their wife, robbed of their prosperity, deprived of all their pleasures and reduced to a state of servitude. Bound by the noose of dharma, they were unable to exhibit their valour. Among all the assembled Kurus, Duryodhana and Karna spoke harsh and insulting words to the angry, defiant and miserable Krishna. O Sanjaya! The earth itself would be burnt down because of those wretched eyes. Would anything have been left of my sons? On seeing Krishna being dragged into the sabha, all the women of the Bharata lineage, who had assembled with Gandhari, loudly cried out in anguish. No agnihotras were offered in the evening, because the brahmanas were enraged at Droupadi's oppression. Terrible winds began to blow, as if the destruction of the beings had arrived. Terrible meteors descended from the sky and Rahu swallowed the sun. This was not the time of parvani. But a terrible fear was created in the minds of the subjects. Fearful fires blazed from the places where chariots are kept. All the flagstaffs crumbled, signifying disaster for the Bharatas. In Duryodhana's agnihotra, jackals howled in terrible tones. From all the directions, donkeys brayed back in response. O Sanjaya!

Bhishma then left with Drona and so did Kripa, Somadatta and the maharatha Bahlika. At that time, prompted by Vidura, I told Krishna that I would grant her whatever boon she desired. Panchali then chose the Pandavas, whose energy is unlimited. I then allowed them to leave, with their chariots and their bows. It is then that the immensely wise Vidura, who knows all the dharma, spoke, 'O descendants of the Bharata lineage! This dragging of Krishna into the assembly hall will bring about your destruction. The daughter of the king of Panchala is the supreme Shri. It was decreed by destiny that Panchali would marry the Pandavas. The angry Parthas will never pardon her humiliation. Nor will the mighty archers, the Vrishnis, or the immensely energetic Panchalas. They are protected by Vasudeva, always fixed on the truth. Surrounded by the Panchalas, Bibhatsu will return. Among them, there will be the immensely strong and mighty archer Bhimasena. He will come whirling his club, like the staff of death. No kings will be able to withstand the sound of the intelligent Partha's Gandiva, or the speed of Bhima's club. Therefore, it seems to me that one should always have peace, and not war, with the Parthas. I have always thought that the Pandavas are stronger than the Kurus. With the force of his arms, Bhima killed in battle the immensely radiant and powerful King Jarasandha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You must ensure peace with the Pandavas. Without any hesitation, act impartially vis-à-vis the two parties.' O son of Gavalgana![56] Thus did Kshatta utter words that were steeped in dharma and artha. But out of the affection I bear for my son, I did not accept these words."'

Aranyaka Parva

The word aranya *means forest and in the eighteen-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Aranyaka Parva comes third. This parva is about the Pandavas' sojourn in the forest. The word vana also means forest and this parva is also sometimes called Vana Parva. Aranyaka Parva has 299 chapters and is the second longest parva after Shanti Parva. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 29 through 44 constitute Aranyaka Parva. Following the practice we have followed, there are two numbers we have used when we give numbers to the chapters. The first number is a consecutive one, from the beginning, and the second number (within brackets) is the numbering within Aranyaka Parva.*

Section Twenty-Nine

Aranyaka Parva

This section has has 327 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 298(1): 42 shlokas
Chapter 299(2): 79 shlokas
Chapter 300(3): 33 shlokas
Chapter 301(4): 10 shlokas
Chapter 302(5): 20 shlokas
Chapter 303(6): 22 shlokas
Chapter 304(7): 24 shlokas
Chapter 305(8): 23 shlokas
Chapter 306(9): 12 shlokas
Chapter 307(10): 23 shlokas
Chapter 308(11): 39 shlokas

The first section within Aranyaka Parva is also called Aranyaka Parva, the word aranyaka having already been explained.

298(1)

Janamejaya asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! When the Parthas were defeated at the gambling match through deceit by the evil-hearted sons of Dhritarashtra and their advisers and were angered, and also heard the harsh words uttered by those who created the enmity, what did the Kouravyas, my ancestors and supreme among men, do? Equal to Shakra in their energy, but having been suddenly dislodged from their riches and confronted with great misery, how did the Parthas spend their time in the forest? Who followed those who had attained that great misfortune? What did they eat? How did they conduct themselves? Where did those great-souled ones dwell? O best among brahmanas! How did twelve years pass in the forest for those great-souled ones who were the destroyers of enemies? How did the princess,[1] supreme among women, immensely fortunate and always devoted to her husbands, one who always spoke the truth, endure the terrible misery of living in the forest, though she did not deserve it? O one blessed with the power of austerities! I wish to hear about the characters of those greatly radiant and energetic ones. O brahmana! Tell me, because my curiosity is great.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been defeated at the gamble with dice by the evil-hearted sons of Dhritarashtra and their advisers, the Pandavas were angered and left Gajasahrya. They emerged through the gate of the city known as Vardhamana. With Krishna[2] and with all their weapons, they headed towards the north. Indrasena[3] and the other servants, fourteen in number, followed them in swift chariots, accompanied by

their wives. On learning that they were leaving, the citizens were overwhelmed with great grief. They assembled together, and speaking to each other, fearlessly censured Bhishma, Vidura, Drona and Goutama[4] repeatedly. "Everything in this lineage is insecure. We are not secure. Our houses are not secure, when the evil Duryodhana, aided by Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana, are covetous of the kingdom. When there is no lineage, there is no good conduct and no dharma, how can there be happiness? Duryodhana hates his superiors. He has abandoned good conduct and his well-wishers. He is avaricious of riches and insolent. He is mean and his character is reprehensible. Where Duryodhana is king, the earth cannot remain healthy. Let us all go where the virtuous Pandavas are going. They are great-souled and not given to wrath. They have control over their senses and enemies. They are modest and the performers of deeds. Their conduct is in accordance with dharma." Having spoken these words, all together, they followed the Pandavas.

'With hands joined in salutation, they spoke to the sons of Kunti and the sons of Madri. "O fortunate ones! Where will you go, leaving us who share in your grief? We will follow you, wherever you are going. We are greatly distressed at learning that you have been defeated by reprehensible enemies, in ways that are not in accordance with dharma. All of us are anxious. We have always been devoted to your happiness and well-being. We are devoted and attached to you. We have always been engaged in that which brings you pleasure. We do not wish to be completely destroyed by living in a kingdom that is ruled by a bad king. O bulls among men! Listen. We will tell you about merits and demerits that result from associating with those who possess good qualities and evil ones. Garments, water, sesame seeds and the ground become fragrant through association with flowers. It is the same from association with good qualities. Association with foolish ones gives birth to a net of delusion. Regular association with the righteous gives birth to dharma. Therefore, those who desire equanimity should associate with the wise, the old, the good, the austere and the righteous. One should serve those who are pure in three ways—learning, birth and deeds. They are superior to the sacred texts. Without performing rites, we will obtain merit by associating with righteous and meritorious ones, just as one obtains demerit by serving evil ones. The sight and touch of, and conversing and sitting with, evil ones, diminish those who follow dharma and make men unsuccessful. Association with mean ones diminishes the intelligence of men. Association with those who are medium gives birth to mediocrity and association with the best makes one supreme. There are qualities that are talked about in the world as giving rise to dharma, kama and artha. These have been mentioned in the Vedas and are sanctioned by the good and are the sources of conduct in the world. These good qualities exist in you, separately and collectively. We wish to ensure our welfare and desire to live among those who possess these good qualities." Yudhishthira replied, "We are fortunate that our subjects, with the brahmanas at the forefront, driven by affection

and compassion, credit us with good qualities that we do not possess. With my brothers, I am requesting you. For the sake of that affection and compassion, do not act otherwise. Our grandfather Bhishma, the king,[5] Vidura, our mother and all our well-wishers are there in Nagasahrya. If you wish to do something for our pleasure, all of you must unite to take care of them and protect them. They are beside themselves with sorrow and grief. You have assembled from distant places. Please return now. It is certain that we will meet again. Let your minds be driven by affection for our kin, whom we leave in your care. Please perform this act, because that is the act that is placed supreme in my heart. If you do this, you will satisfy me and show me homage." Having been thus advised by Dharmaraja, the subjects raised a terrible sound of wailing. "Alas! O king!" They were miserable and extremely grief-stricken. Remembering the good qualities of the Parthas, though unwilling, they returned after meeting the Pandavas.

'When the citizens returned, the Pandavas ascended their chariots and went to a large banyan tree named Pramana, situated on the banks of the Jahnavi.[6] The Pandavas reached the banyan tree at the close of the day. The brave warriors touched the pure water and spent the night there. Stricken with grief, they spent the night there, subsisting only on water. Some brahmanas had followed them out of the love they bore for them, with their disciples and relatives. Some maintained the fire,[7] while others did not. Surrounded by those who knew the brahman, the king[8] was radiant. At the hour that is both beautiful and terrible,[9] the fires were lit and after chanting the name of the brahman, conversations continued. In voices that were as soft as those of swans, the foremost among the brahmanas consoled the king, supreme among Kurus, and they spent the entire night.'

299(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'Those performers of unsullied deeds[10] were ready to leave for the forest. When night had passed and morning dawned, the brahmanas who subsisted by begging for alms stood before them. At that, Kunti's son Yudhishthira spoke to them. "We have been robbed of everything. We have been robbed of our kingdom. We have been robbed of our prosperity. In our sorrow, we will now go to the forest and live on fruit, roots and meat. The forest is full of many dangers and has many predators and serpents. It seems to me that without a doubt, you will face many difficulties there. The sufferings of brahmanas overwhelm even the gods, not to speak of men. O brahmanas! Return where you wish to go." The brahmanas replied, "O king! We are ready to travel where you are travelling. Please do not abandon those who are devoted to you and those who can see what true dharma is. The gods themselves show compassion for their devotees, especially brahmanas who follow good conduct." Yudhisthira said, "O

brahmanas! I too always have supreme devotion towards brahmanas. But the difficulties of my associates overwhelm me. My brothers are capable of collecting fruit, roots and deer. But they are deluded by the misery and the sorrow that has overtaken them, by the oppression faced by Droupadi and by the robbing of the kingdom. Since they are so miserable and wretched, I cannot impose painful tasks on them."[11] The brahmanas replied, "O lord of the earth! Do not have any thoughts in your heart about our subsistence. We will follow you. We will find our food ourselves in the forest. We will bring you good fortune through our meditation and our prayers. We will entertain you in the forest through stories and ourselves be happy." Yudhishthira said, "There is no doubt that it will be this way. We will find pleasure in associating with brahmanas. But because of the lowly condition to which I have been reduced, I only see my own inferiority. How can I witness all of you collecting your own food and suffer undeserved difficulties because of your affection for me? Shame on the evil sons of Dhritarashtra!" Having said this, the king sat down on the ground and began to sorrow.

'There was a learned brahmana named Shounaka. He was skilled in *samkhya yoga*[12] and he spoke to the king, "There are a thousand reasons for grief and a hundred reasons for fear that delude people every day. But not those who are learned. Intelligent ones like you do not get caught in deeds that are counter to knowledge and afflicted by many faults, so that welfare is destroyed. O king! The eight[13] forms of knowledge exist in you. This is the best of everything and destroys evil, and is in conformity with *shruti*[14] and *smriti*.[15] When calamities arise because of penury or hardship, or are caused by the deeds of kin, learned ones like you don't become miserable because of physical or mental sorrow. Listen. I will recount to you the shlokas that the great-souled Janaka[16] chanted in earlier times, for imparting stability to one's soul. 'The world is engulfed in two kinds of misery, those resulting from the mind and from the body. Individually and collectively, listen to the means of alleviating them. There are four kinds of reasons behind physical sorrow—disease, the touch of something painful, labour and distance from loved things. Mental and physical pain can be reduced through treatment, or by not thinking about them. These are the two courses of action. That is the reason intelligent physicians first try to pacify mental pain by saying that which brings pleasure and offering objects that bring pleasure. Just as a hot iron ball affects the water in a pot, mental pain affects the body. Just as water quenches fire, knowledge quenches mental ailments. When the mind is pacified, the body is also pacified. The root of all mental ailments is affection. Affection makes a man attached and that leads to misery. Attachment is the root of all unhappiness and attachment causes fear. Every kind of unhappiness and happiness results from attachment. It is attachment that leads to the desire for material objects. Both are evil, but the former has been said to be more serious.[17] The fire in a hollow tree burns down the entire tree, right to the roots. Like

that, the evil of attachment, no matter how small, destroys dharma and artha. He who has withdrawn is not detached. But one who can see the faults[18] from proximity is dispassionate, bears no hatred and is detached from objects. Therefore, one should not be attached to one's allies, one's friends or the riches one has accumulated. Learning destroys attachment to that which results from one's body. Like water on a lotus leaf, one who is united with the learning of the sacred texts has controlled his soul and is not touched by affection. A man overcome with attachment is immersed in desire. From the desire that is created, thirst expands.[19] Thirst is everything evil and always disturbs man. It is terrible and leads to a lot that is against dharma. It ties one down in sin. Those who cannot give it up are deluded. It does not decay with the body's decay. It is like a fatal disease. He who discards this thirst, becomes happy. This thirst has no beginning and no end. It destroys men from inside their bodies. Like a fire that has no origin but has arisen, it destroys. Like kindling is destroyed by the fire that it has created, one who has not controlled his soul is destroyed through his natural avarice. Just as those who are alive are scared of death, those who have riches are always scared of the king, water, fire, thieves and relatives. A meat in the air is devoured by birds, on the ground by predatory beasts and in the water by fish. But one with riches is devoured everywhere. To some men, riches are the source of disaster. A man who is addicted to the superiority of riches will never attain superiority. Therefore, the acquisition of riches always increases the delusion of the mind and is the source of miserliness, insolence, vanity, fear and anxiety. The wise ones know that riches are the source of miseries in bodies. There is misery in earning riches, preserving it and in its decay. Its destruction brings unhappiness. Its expenditure brings unhappiness. Even then, people murder for riches. There is unhappiness in giving up riches. But there is unhappiness also in preserving it. Since its possession brings such misery, one should not think about its loss. Deluded ones are always dissatisfied, the learned are content. There is no end to thirst. Contentment is the supreme happiness. The learned ones know that youth, beauty, life, collection of riches, prosperity and association with loved ones are temporary and never crave for these. Therefore, one should refrain from accumulation of riches and consequent unhappiness. One who has accumulated riches is never seen without difficulties. For this reason, those who are righteous praise those who have no desire for wealth. It is better not to touch mud than wash after touching it.'[20] O Yudhisthira! Therefore, you should not have a desire for riches. If you wish to act in accordance with dharma, free yourself from desire for riches."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O brahmana! I do not desire riches because I wish to enjoy them after acquisition. I do not desire them out of avarice. I desire them so that I can support the brahmanas. O brahmana! How can someone like me, who is in the householder stage, fail to support and sustain those who follow him? It is taught that one must divide among all beings. One who is a householder should give to those who

do not cook themselves.[21] The houses of good men should never lack four things—grass, ground, water and welcoming words. Those who are sick must be given a bed.[22] Those who are tired of standing must be given a seat.[23] Those who are thirsty must be given a drink and those who are hungry must be given food. One's eyesight must be given.[24] One's heart must be given. One's pleasant words must be given. One must stand up to greet the guest and offer him proper homage. Agnihotra, bulls, kin, guests, relatives, sons, wives and servants—burn down those who do not offer homage. No one should cook food only for one's own self. Nor should animals be killed in vain. No one should eat food oneself, without having offered it in the proper fashion. In the morning and in the evening, let food be spread out on the ground for dogs, *svapachas*,[25] birds and the Vishvadevas.[26] Eating the food that is left is like partaking of ambrosia. What is left at the end of a sacrifice is also like ambrosia. It is said that one who leads the life of a householder while following these practices follows the supreme dharma. O brahmana! What do you think?"

'Shounaka said, "Alas! It is a great misery that the world is full of contradictions. The evil find satisfaction in that which scares the good. Driven by delusion and attachment, slaves to gratification of their senses, foolish men perform many acts for the sake of the penis and the stomach. Like a charioteer who has lost control over evil and wild horses, even sensible men lose their bearing and are led astray by their senses. When any of the six senses[27] comes close to an object, preconceived desire springs up in the mind and manifests itself through them. When the mind is directed towards enjoying the object of the senses, attachment and resolution are created. That resolution is the seed of desire towards an object, and pierced, one falls into the flames of avarice, like a moth in its greed for light. Thus, immersed in the great delusion of happiness and deluded by the desire for pleasure and food, he does not know his own self. He descends on earth, from one womb to another. As a result of ignorance, karma and thirst, he is whirled around in a wheel, changing from one being to another—from Brahma to a blade of grass, born repeatedly in water, on the ground and in the sky. This is the path of those who don't know. Listen to that of the ones who know. This is the way of those who are always devoted to superior dharma and seek to free themselves. These are the words of the Vedas. Act, but be detached from the act. According to this, one should not practise any dharma because of desire. It has been said that there is an eightfold path towards dharma—sacrifices, studying, gifts, austerities, truthfulness, forbearance, self-control and lack of avarice. Of these, the first four are established in *pitriyana*.[28] Therefore, one should always act because a deed has to be done, not because of desire. The second four represent *devayana*,[29] always followed by those who are virtuous. One whose soul is pure should always travel along these eight paths—through correct resolution and

association, correct deprivation of the senses, correct observance of the specific vows, correct serving of superiors, correct regulation of food, correct studying and dissemination, correct renunciation of rituals and correct restraining of thoughts. Those who have conquered life[30] perform their deeds in this way. It is because they are united with the powers of yoga and are bereft of attachment and hatred that gods like the Rudras, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Vasus and the Ashvins are able to sustain beings and possess prosperity. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Like them, you must attain great equanimity. You must seek to obtain success in austerities and in yoga. Through your deeds, you have already obtained success for your father and your mother. So that you can sustain the brahmanas, you must now seek success in your austerities. Those who obtain such success can obtain whatever they wish because of that. Therefore, practise austerities. Accomplish everything that your soul desires."'

300(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Shounaka, Kunti's son Yudhishthira went to his priest and in the midst of his brothers, said, "These brahmanas are learned in the Vedas. When I left, they followed me. I am immersed in many miseries and do not have the powers to sustain them. I cannot abandon them. But nor do I have the powers to give to them. O illustrious one! Please tell me. What is the right course of action for me?" Dhoumya, supreme among those who uphold dharma, thought for a moment about what was the right course of action in accordance with dharma. He then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, "In ancient times, when beings were created, they suffered from great hunger. Like their own father, Savita[31] felt compassion for them. While proceeding on his northern course,[32] he used his energy to suck up the juices. Then, returning on his southern course,[33] the sun placed them in the earth. When he became lord of the fields, the lord of the herbs[34] collected the sun's energy and created the clouds. Sprinkled with the moon's energy, it is the sun himself who is created as the herbs with six flavours.[35] It is this that provides food to all beings on earth. Thus, it is the sun that provides food for sustaining the lives of all beings. He is the father of all beings. Therefore, seek refuge with him. All great-souled kings, pure in birth and in deeds, save all their subjects by resorting to great austerities. Bhima,[36] Kartavirya, Vainya and Nahusha—all of them saved their subjects through austerities, yoga and meditation. O one with dharma in your heart! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have been purified through your deeds. Like that, basing yourself in dharma, you must sustain the brahmanas by resorting to austerities." Having been thus addressed by Dhoumya in words that were appropriate for the time, the pure-souled Dharmaraja undertook supreme austerities. After touching the waters of the Ganga and the wind, the one with dharma in his soul resorted to yoga and pranayama, controlled his senses and

lived on air, worshipping Divakara[37] with offerings of flowers and fireless oblations.'

Janamejaya asked, 'For the sake of the brahmanas, how did King Yudhishthira, bull among the Kurus, worship Surya, whose valour is extraordinary?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! After purifying yourself, listen attentively to my words. O Indra among kings! Find the time and I will tell you everything in detail. O immensely intelligent one! Listen to the one hundred and eight pure names[38] that were recited by Dhoumya to Partha, best among great-souled ones—Surya, Aryama, Bhaga, Tvashta, Pusha, Arka, Savita, Ravi, Gabhastiman, Aja, Kala, Mrityu, Dhata, Prabhakara, Prithivi, Apa, Teja, Kha, Vayu, Parayana, Soma, Brihaspati, Shukra, Budha, Angaraka, Indra, Vivasvat, Diptamshu, Shuchi, Shouri, Shanaischara, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda, Vaishravana, Yama, Vaidyuta, Jathara, Aindhana, Tejaspati, Dharmadhvaja, Vedakarta, Vedanga, Vedavahana, Krita, Treta, Dvapara, Kali, Sarvamarashraya, Kala, Kashtha, Muhurta, Paksha, Masa, Ritu, Samvatsarakara, Ashvattha, Kalachakra, Vibhavasu, Purusha, Shashvata, Yogi, Vyaktavyakta, Sanatana, Lokadhyaksha, Prajadhyaksha, Vishvakarma, Tamonuda, Varuna, Sagara, Amshu, Jimuta, Jivana, Ariha, Bhutashraya, Bhutapati, Sarvabhutanishevita, Mani, Suvarna, Bhutadi, Kamada, Sarvatomukha, Jaya, Vishala, Varada, Shighraga, Pranadharana, Dhanvantari, Dhumaketu, Adideva, Aditya,[39] Dvadashatma, Aravindaksha, Pita, Mata, Pitamaha, Svargadvara, Prajadvara, Mokshadvara, Trivishtapa, Dehakarta, Prashantatma, Vishvatma, Vishvatomukha, Characharatma, Sukshmatma, Maitra and Vapushanvita. These are the sacred one hundred and eight names of the great-souled Surya, all deserving of praise.[40] They were recounted by the great-souled Shakra. Narada obtained them from Shakra and Dhoumya obtained them later. Yudhishthira got them from Dhoumya and obtained all that he desired.

'You who are served by the masses of the gods, the ancestors and the yakshas. You who are worshipped by the asuras, nishacharas and siddhas. You who are like the fire and the best of gold. O Bhaskara![41] With you in my mind, I bow down before you.[42] He who recites this at the time of sunrise with a calm frame of mind obtains sons and a treasury of riches and gems. Such a man can always remember his past lives. He obtains memory and supreme wisdom. Let a man recite this chant to the supreme of gods, after concentrating and purifying his mind. He will be freed from the fire and ocean of grief and will obtain everything that his mind desires.'

301(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'At that,[43] Divakara was pleased and showed himself to the Pandava in his own body. He was radiant and blazed like the fire. "O king! You will get everything that you wish for. I will provide you food for the twelve years. There will be no shortage of the four kinds of food in your kitchen—fruit, roots, meat and vegetables.

There will be no shortage of many riches too." Having said this, he vanished.[44]

'Having obtained this boon, Kounteya, knowledgeable in the ways of dharma, arose from the water.[45] The one without decay grasped Dhoumya's feet and embraced his brothers. He went and met Droupadi. While she watched, the lord Pandava cooked the food in the kitchen. However, once cooked, the four kinds of forest fare[46] increased and became inexhaustible. With that, he fed the brahmanas. When the brahmanas had been fed and his younger brothers had also eaten, Yudhishthira later ate the remainder and this came to be known as *vighasa*.[47] After feeding Yudhishthira, Parshati[48] ate the remnants. The lord,[49] who was as radiant as Divakara himself, thus obtained a boon from Divakara and gave the brahmanas all that they desired. On the appointed tithis and nakshatras, with his priest at the forefront, he performed sacrifices in accordance with the mantras and the rituals. Thereupon, with their departure blessed, the Pandavas, with Dhoumya and surrounded by a mass of brahmanas, left for the forest of Kamyaka.'

302(5)

Vaishampayana said, 'After the Pandavas had left for the forest, Ambika's son,[50] whose wisdom was in his eyes,[51] was tormented and happily seated himself.[52] The king spoke these words to the infinitely intelligent Vidura, who had dharma in his soul, "Your intelligence is like that of the pure Bhargava.[53] You know all the subtleties of supreme dharma. The Kouravas applaud you as one who is impartial. Tell me what is right for me and for them.[54] O Vidura! Now that all this has happened, what should be done? How can the citizens be made to show us respect? They[55] may destroy us from our roots. But I don't want their destruction either."

'Vidura replied, "O Indra among men! Dharma has three roots.[56] It has been said that the roots of a kingdom are also vested in dharma. O king! Therefore, sustain dharma to the best of your powers. Protect your sons and the sons of Pandu. What happened in the sabha destroyed dharma. Led by Soubala, those evil-hearted ones challenged Kunti's son to a gamble with dice and your son vanquished one who is devoted to the truth. O king! In this, you were misguided. O Kouravya! But I see a means of saving yourself, whereby your son can be cleansed of sin and be established in this world as a righteous one. O king! Let Pandu's sons regain everything that you took in excess of what is yours. It has been said that the supreme dharma of a king is to be content with what he has and not covet that of others. This is your foremost task, to gratify them[57] and censure Shakuni. Otherwise, no one may remain from your sons. O king! You should do this immediately. O king! If you do not do this, it is certain that the lineage of the Kurus will be destroyed. When angered, neither Bhimasena nor Arjuna will leave enemies unslain in a war.

Savyasachi, skilled in the use of weapons, is their warrior. He possesses the bow named Gandiva, unmatched in the world. Bhima with the powerful arms is their warrior. Who in the world is beyond their reach? Earlier, as soon as your son was born, I told you what would have brought your well-being. O king! For the sake of the lineage, I asked you to abandon your son. But you did not perform that task. O king! If you do not now listen to what is good for you, you will have to regret it later. If your son agrees to rule the kingdom in friendship with the Pandavas, there will be no regret and together with your son, you will find happiness. But if the opposite happens, subdue him[58] and instate Pandu's son as the king. O king! Let Ajatashatru,[59] who is devoid of passion, rule the earth in accordance with dharma. O king! Then all the lords of the earth will immediately offer us homage, like vaishyas. O king! Let Duryodhana, Shakuni and the son of a suta[60] happily wait upon the sons of Pandu. Let Duhshasana seek Bhimasena's pardon and that of Drupada's daughter, in the middle of the sabha. After pacifying Yudhishthira, offer him homage and instate him in the kingdom. O king! Asked by you, what else can I say? If you act according to what I have said, you will have performed the right task."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Vidura! These are the words you spoke in the sabha, for the sake of the Pandavas and for me. But this is for their welfare and not for mine. My mind does not approve of any of this. How have you arrived at this conclusion, if not for the welfare of the Pandavas? I now think that you don't have my welfare in mind. How can I abandon my son for the sake of the Pandavas? There is no doubt that they are my sons too but Duryodhana has been born from my own body. Speaking for the welfare of others and appearing as one impartial, how can you ask me to abandon my own body? O Vidura! Though I hold you in great respect, everything that your tongue has uttered in wrong. Stay or go, as you please. However much she is pacified, an unchaste wife always leaves."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having uttered these words, Dhritarashtra suddenly arose and went away to his inner quarters. Declaring that this was not the way it should be, Vidura went away to where the Parthas were.'

303(6)

Vaishampayana said, 'So as to live in the forest, the Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, left the banks of the Jahnavi with their followers and went to Kurukshetra. They worshipped at the Sarasvati, the Dhrishadvati and the Yamuna[61] and travelling from forest to forest, headed in a western direction. At last, on the banks of the Sarasvati, they saw before them the forest of Kamyaka, beloved by sages and located on a desert plain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Consoled and accompanied by the sages, the heroes settled down in that forest, teeming with many animals and birds.

Vidura then decided to meet the Pandavas. In a single chariot, he went to the prosperous Kamyaka forest. Vidura reached that forest in a chariot drawn by swift horses. He saw Dharmaraja seated in a secluded spot, together with Droupadi, his brothers and brahmanas. From a distance, the truthful king saw Vidura speedily approach and told his brother Bhimasena, "What will Kshatta say when he meets us? Is it possible that he comes again at Soubala's words, to challenge me once more to a gamble with dice? Does the mean Shakuni wish to win our weapons by playing once again with dice? O Bhimasena! If challenged by anyone, I am unable to refuse. Yet if the Gandiva is uncertain,[62] our winning back the kingdom is uncertain." O king! Then all the Pandavas stood up and welcomed Vidura. After the due homage had been shown, Ajamidha[63] sat down among the sons of Pandu and made the usual enquiries.

'After Vidura had rested, those bulls among men asked him the reason for his coming. He told them in detail about the conduct of Ambika's son, Dhritarashtra. Vidura said, "O Ajatashatru! Dhritarashtra maintains me. He summoned me and after showing his respects, told me, 'This is what has happened. Now impartially, tell me what is good for me and for them.' I told him what is good for the Kouravas and also what will bring welfare to Dhritarashtra. But he did not like what I said. I could not think of any other course that would bring welfare. O Pandavas! I told him what would bring supreme welfare. But Ambika's son did not listen to those words. Just as a sick man does not like medicine,[64] my words did not find pleasure with him. O Ajatashatru! Like an unchaste woman cannot be brought to the house of one who is learned, he cannot be brought to well-being. The bull among the Bharata lineage did not like what I said, like a maiden does not like a husband who is sixty years old. O king! The destruction of the Kouravas is certain. Dhritarashtra will never find supreme well-being. Just as water on a lotus leaf does not stick there, my medicine[65] did not stick to him. Then the angry Dhritarashtra told me, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Go wherever your respect takes you. I do not desire you as an adviser any longer, to rule the earth or the city.' O Indra among men! Having been thus abandoned by King Dhritarashtra, I have now come here to give you good advice. I will now repeat everything that I said in the sabha. Hear them and bear them in mind. The man who pardons the terrible miseries caused by his enemies and waits for his time, gradually extending himself like feeding a fire, that self-controlled man rules the entire earth alone. O king! If one shares one's riches with one's companions, the companions also share in one's adversity. That is the way to gather one's companions. It has been said that companions are the way to win the earth. O Pandava! Without any lamentations, truth is best. Food should be equally shared with one's companions. One should never hold oneself above others. Such conduct increases the prosperity of kings." Yudhishthira replied, "I will do what you advise me and, undisturbed by passion, follow your supreme intelligence. In every time and place, I will

completely follow what you say."'

304(7)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Vidura had left for the hermitage of the Pandavas, the immensely wise Dhritarashtra repented. He went to the door of the sabha and deluded by his memories of Vidura, fell down unconscious in the presence of the lords of the earth. When he regained consciousness, he got up from the ground. Sanjaya was with him and the king told him these words, "My brother and well-wisher is like Dharma himself. On remembering him, my heart is being torn apart. Go quickly and bring my brother to me, one who is knowledgeable about dharma." Uttering these words, the king lamented piteously. He was tormented by repentance and deluded by Vidura's memory. Out of brotherly affection, the king again spoke these words to Sanjaya. "O Sanjaya! My brother Vidura suffered because of my evil wrath. Go and find out if he is still alive. That brother of mine is wise and has infinite intelligence. Never has he practised the slightest falsehood. Why should this supremely intelligent one suffer a wrong from me? O Sanjaya! That wise one should not give up his life. Go find him and bring him back." On hearing the king's words, Sanjaya approved and said that he would act accordingly.

'Sanjaya set out for the Kamyaka forest. He soon arrived at the forest where the Pandavas were and saw Yudhishthira, attired in the skin of ruru deer. He was seated with Vidura, with thousands of brahmanas. He was surrounded by his brothers, like Shatakratu by the gods. Coming up to Yudhishthira, Sanjaya showed him homage and to Bhima, Arjuna and the twins, as each one deserved. The king[66] asked him about his welfare. When Sanjaya was happily seated, he explained the reasons for his coming and said, "O Kshatta! Ambika's son, King Dhritarashtra, remembers you. Please go and see him quickly and revive the king. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![67] Take your leave of the Pandavas, supreme among men. O revered one! On the command of that lion among kings, return immediately." Having been thus addressed, the intelligent Vidura, always affectionate towards his relatives, took Yudhishthira's leave and returned to Gajasahrya. The powerful Dhritarashtra told the immensely wise one, "O unblemished one! O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! It is through good fortune that you have remembered me. It is through good fortune that you have come back. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Because of you, I could not sleep during the day and during the night. While awake, I saw my body as if it had no soul." He then took Vidura on his lap and smelt the top of his head. He said, "Forgive what I had said to you in anger." Vidura replied, "O king! I have forgiven you. You are my greatest preceptor. I have come here swiftly so as to see you. O tiger among men! O king! Men who have dharma in their hearts, come to those who are distressed, without thinking whether the deed should be done. Your sons are as dear to me as Pandu's sons. But since they are now in distress,

my intelligence went out towards them." Having thus become reconciled towards each other, the immensely radiant brothers, Vidura and Dhritarashtra, obtained supreme happiness.'

305(8)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard that Vidura had returned and that he had been pacified by the king,[68] the evil-minded king who was Dhritarashtra's son[69] burnt with anger. Darkness having entered his mind, the king summoned Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana and told them these words, "The adviser honoured by Dhritarashtra has returned. The learned Vidura is a well-wisher of the sons of Pandu and is always devoted to their welfare. Advice me about what is in my welfare, so that Vidura does not influence his[70] intelligence to again bring the Pandavas back. If I again see the Parthas return here in some way, I will certainly dry up, without life and without riches. I will consume poison or hang myself, or use a weapon or enter the fire. I will never again be able to witness their prosperity."

'Shakuni replied, "O king! O lord of the earth! Why are you falling prey to these childlike thoughts? They have gone after an agreement. Therefore, their return won't happen. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas are always established in the truth of their words. O son! They will never accept your father's words. If however they accept them and return again to the city, thus violating the agreement, we will again play, staking everything. Apparently obedient to the king[71] and maintaining a middle position,[72] we will protect ourselves and wait to see many weaknesses emerge in the Pandavas."

'Duhshasana said, "O immensely intelligent maternal uncle! It will be exactly as you say. The intelligent words you utter have always pleased me."

'Karna said, "O Duryodhana! All of us always try to accomplish what you desire. O king! I notice that all of us are united in our view."

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana then turned his face away, without being greatly happy. On realizing this, Karna opened his radiant eyes wide. In great anger, he aroused himself, and spoke to Duhshasana and Soubala in wrath, "O lords of men! Listen to my true views. With servile hands, we are trying to do everything that pleases the king.[73] But while remaining stationary, we cannot always bring him pleasure. Let us now grasp our armour and weapons and mounting our chariots, go together and kill the Pandavas, who are roaming in the forest. When they have all been pacified and have left for the unknown journey,[74] we and Dhritarashtra's sons will be unchallenged. As long as they are distressed and as long as they are immersed in grief, as long as they are without allies, till then, we can do this. This is my view." Having heard these words, they applauded them repeatedly. All

of them then praised the suta's son, saying that his words were excellent. Having said this, all those angry ones separately mounted their chariots. They then set out in a body, having made up their minds to kill the Pandavas. The pure-souled and illustrious lord Krishna Dvaipayana[75] saw this with his divine sight and got to know about their departure. He is the illustrious one who is worshipped by all the worlds. He came to them and restrained them. He then swiftly went to the place where the one whose wisdom was his sight[76] was seated, and spoke to him.'

306(9)

'Vyasa said, "O immensely wise Dhritarashtra! Listen to my words. I will tell you what will bring supreme welfare to all the Kouravas. O mighty-armed one! It does not please me that the Pandavas have gone to the forest and that they have been deceitfully defeated by Duryodhana's followers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After the completion of thirteen years, they will remember their oppression and in anger, unleash venom on the Kouravas. For the sake of the kingdom, why is your evil-souled and evil-minded son always angry? Why does he want to kill the Pandavas? Restrain finally the deluded one. Bring your son to the path of pacification. In trying to kill the ones who now live in the forest, he will be freed from his own life. Do what the wise Vidura has said. And Bhishma, and we, and Kripa, and Drona and other wise ones have told you. O immensely intelligent one! War with one's relatives is reprehensible. O king! This is not dharma, nor is it the way to fame. Refrain from it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Such is his obsession with the Pandavas, that if it is ignored, great disaster will follow. Or let your evil-souled son go to the forest. O king! Let him live with the Pandavas, alone and without allies. O lord of men! If from this association affection towards the Pandavas results in your son, you will have succeeded in your task. O great king! It has been said that the nature instilled in a man at birth does not leave him before his death. What do Bhishma, Drona and Vidura think? What about you? What is right must be done immediately, before the objective becomes impossible."'

307(10)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O illustrious one! This affair of the gamble did not bring me pleasure. O sage! I think it was destiny which overcame me and made me agree. It did not bring pleasure to Bhishma, Drona or Vidura either, nor to Gandhari. There is no doubt that the gambling was caused by delusion. O illustrious one! I cannot abandon the insensible Duryodhana. O one with vows! Though I know, I am bound by affection for my son."

'Vyasa replied, "O king! O Vichitravirya's son! What you have said is true. I know that a son is supreme and nothing is superior to a son. Indra himself realized this through the

flow of Surabhi's[77] tears. He understood that a son surpasses all other riches, no matter how expensive. O lord of the earth! In this connection, I will recount that great and supreme account, the conversation between Surabhi and Indra. O king! O son! In times long past, it is said that Surabhi, the mother of all cows, cried out in heaven. Out of compassion for her, Indra asked, 'O fortunate one! Why are you crying like this? Is everything well with the gods, men and cattle? Or is there some misfortune that is more than slight?' Surabhi replied, 'O lord of the thirty gods! I do not see any calamity looming before you. O Koushika![78] I am sorrowing for my son and that is the reason I am weeping. My son is small and weak and he is burdened by the plough. See that terrible peasant beat him with a stick. O lord of the gods! I see him terribly exhausted and close to death. O lord of the gods! I am overcome with compassion for him and my mind is agitated. One of those two[79] is stronger and bears the burden of greater weight. But the other one has little strength of life and is thin, with nothing but veins. O Vasava! He bears the burden with great difficulty and that is the reason I am grieving. He is close to death and is repeatedly beaten with the stick. O Vasava! Look. He is unable to bear the burden. Driven by compassion for him, I am sorrowful and extremely miserable. I am weeping and tears of sorrow are flowing from my eyes.' Indra asked, 'O beautiful one! Thousands of your sons are equally oppressed. Why are you driven by compassion for this one? He is only one among several oppressed.' Surabhi replied, 'I have thousands of sons everywhere and I look upon them equally. O Shakra! But my compassion is truly greater for the son who is oppressed.' On hearing Surabhi's words, Indra was greatly surprised. O Kouravya! He became convinced that a son was dearer than one's own life. At that, the illustrious chastiser of Paka suddenly let loose a great shower of rain there and caused an obstruction to the act of ploughing.

'"O king! As Surabhi had said, all your sons may be equal to you. But among all your sons, your compassion should be greatest towards the one who is oppressed. O son! Just as Pandu was my son, you are also my son, and so is the immensely wise Vidura. It is out of affection towards you that I am telling you all this. O lord of the earth! You have one hundred and one sons to outlive you.[80] But Pandu's are seen to be only five and they are in a bad state and extremely miserable. How will they manage to remain alive? How will they prosper? Such thoughts about the miserable sons of Pritha torment my mind. O lord of the earth! If you wish the Kouravas to live, let your son Duryodhana go to the Pandavas and make peace."'

308(11)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O immensely wise sage! It is exactly as you say. I know this and so do all the other lords of men. O sage! What you consider to be beneficial for the welfare of the Kurus was also pointed out to me by Vidura, Bhishma and Drona. If you have

compassion for the Kouravas, teach my evil-souled son Duryodhana."

'Vyasa replied, "O king! The illustrious rishi Maitreya has come to see you, after having spent time with the Pandava brothers. O king! For the sake of bringing rightful peace to this lineage of yours, this great rishi will instruct your son Duryodhana. O Indra among kings! Whatever he says should be done without any hesitation. If the task is not done, he will curse your son in rage."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, Vyasa went away and Maitreya appeared. The lord of men[81] came and worshipped him, together with his sons, offering gifts, water to wash his feet and performing other rituals. After the bull among sages had rested, Ambika's son, King Dhritarashtra, courteously asked him questions. "O illustrious one! Has your journey from Kurujangala[82] been comfortable? Are the brave warriors, the five Pandava brothers, well? Do those bulls among men desire to spend their time in accordance with the agreement? Will the fraternal affection among the Kurus continue unabated?" Maitreya replied, "Setting out on a journey of pilgrimage, I arrived in Kurujangala. While roaming around, I saw Dharmaraja in Kamyaka forest. He had matted hair, wore deerskins and was living in a hermitage. O lord! Many sages had assembled there to see the great-souled one. O great king! It was there that I heard about the blunder committed by your son and about the evil course of action he adopted through the gambling match. I have therefore come to you out of affection for the Kouravas. O lord! I have always had affection and love towards you. O king! When you and Bhishma are still alive, it is not proper that your sons should act against each other. O king! You yourself are the central pillar,[83] in both punishing and rewarding. Why did you then ignore this terrible evil that has now arisen? O descendant of the Kuru lineage![84] O king! What happened in the sabha was like the behaviour of *dasyus*.[85] You will no longer be able to shine in an assembly of ascetics." Then he turned to the intolerant King Duryodhana.

'The illustrious rishi Maitreya spoke to him in soft tones, "O mighty-armed Duryodhana! O supreme among eloquent ones! Listen. O immensely wise one! The words I utter are for your welfare. O king! O bull among men! Do not fight with the Pandavas. Do what is good for you, for the Pandavas, for the Kurus and for the world. All those tigers among men[86] are brave warriors, valorous in war. All of them have the strength of ten thousand elephants and are as firm as the vajra. All of them follow the vow of truth and all of them have pride in their manliness. They have killed rakshasas, who can assume any form at will and are the enemies of the gods. These rakshasas had chiefs like Hidimba, Baka and Kirmira. When they left this place, he[87] obstructed the path of those great-souled ones. His soul was terrible and he was as immobile as a mountain peak. Bhima, supremely proud in battle and supreme in strength among strong ones, killed him like an animal, the way a tiger kills small animals. O king! Look

at the royal conquest, where the mighty archer Jarasandha, with the strength of ten thousand elephants, was killed in battle by Bhima. They have Vasudeva as their relative and Parshata[88] as a brother-in-law. Which man, susceptible to old age and death, would dare confront them in battle?[89] O bull among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason you should strive for peace with the Pandavas. O king! Listen to my words. Otherwise, you will expose yourself to death." O lord of the earth! Having heard these words spoken by Maitreya, Duryodhana smiled and drew patterns on the ground with his feet. With his arms, he slapped his thighs, which were like the trunks of elephants. The evil-minded one said nothing, but stood there, with his head slightly bent.

'O king! On seeing Duryodhana ignore him and draw patterns on the ground, Maitreya was angered. Maitreya, supreme among sages, became overcome with anger. As if decreed by destiny, the sage got ready to curse him. Maitreya's eyes were red with anger. He touched the air[90] and cursed Dhritarashtra's evil-minded son, "Since you ignored me and since you did not find my words attractive, you will soon reap the fruits of your insolence. In the great war that will result from the enmity created by you, the powerful Bhima will smash your thigh with the blow of a club." When he had uttered these words, Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, sought to pacify the sage and pleaded with him that this might not happen. Maitreya replied, "O king! O son! It is only if your son makes peace that what I have said won't happen. But if the opposite occurs, it will happen." O Indra among kings! Deviated from his objective, Duryodhana's father then asked Maitreya how Kirmira had been killed by Bhima. Maitreya replied, "I will not tell you, since you are intolerant and my words find no favour with your son. After I have left, Vidura will tell you everything." Having said this, Maitreya went away, just as he had come. Duryodhana also left the place, anxious about the killing of Kirmira.'

Section Thirty

Kirmira-vadha Parva

This section has 75 shlokas and only one chapter.

Kirmira was a rakshasa mentioned in the last section and as already explained the word vadha means killing. So this section is about the killing of Kirmira.

309(12)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Kshatta! I wish to hear about the killing of Kirmira. Tell me about the encounter between the rakshasa and Bhimasena."

'Vidura replied, "Hear about this superhuman deed of Bhima's. Earlier, I have repeatedly heard about this in my conversation with them.[1] O Indra among kings! Having been vanquished in the game with dice, the Pandavas left this place. Having travelled for three days and three nights, they arrived at the forest known as Kamyaka. O king! In the dead of the night, when the midnight hour had passed, man-eating rakshasas, whose deeds are terrible, begin to roam around. Therefore, out of fear for the maneaters, we had heard that ascetics, cowherds and others who go to the forest, always maintain a distance from the forest at that time.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was at that time that they entered and saw a rakshasa obstructing their path. His eyes blazed and he was terrible. He held a blazing brand. With outstretched arms and a fearful face, he stood and obstructed the path along which the extenders of the Kuru lineage were travelling. Eight of his teeth jutted out. His eyes were copper-red. The hair on his head blazed and stood up erect. He looked like a monsoon cloud, tinged with the rays of the sun and lightning and adorned with a flock of cranes.[2] He let out a mighty roar and created the maya used by rakshasas. When he let loose his giant roar, it was like the roar of clouds filled with rain. Frightened by this roar, the birds fled in all directions. They cried out in fear and so did the animals that lived on the ground and in the water. As a result of deer, elephants, buffaloes and bears fleeing in all directions, it seemed as if the entire forest was running away from the roar. As a result of the wind generated by his thighs, many creepers laden with copper-red blossoms seemed to embrace the tall trees. At that time, a terrible wind began to blow and because of the dust, the sky lost the bear.[3] Like a great enemy that causes infinite grief to the five senses, he was still unknown to the five sons of Pandu. From a distance he saw the Pandavas, attired in black deerskins. Like the Mount Mainaka, he obstructed their entry into the forest.

'"On approaching near, the lotus-eyed Krishna[4] was terrified and closed her eyes in

fear at the sight of something never seen before. She was the one whose hair had been dishevelled by Duhshasana's hand. She now stood there, like a river that had overrun its banks between five mountains. On seeing her lose her senses, the five Pandavas grasped her, like the five senses are attached to objects of pleasure. In the sight of the five sons of Pandu, the valorous Dhoumya accurately used many types of mantras to destroy the maya, terrible of form, created by the rakshasa. On seeing his maya destroyed, the immensely strong one widened his eyes in anger. The cruel one, who could assume any form at will, appeared like Yama himself.

'"Then the greatly wise King Yudhishthira spoke to him, 'Who are you and whom do you belong to? Tell us what we can do for you.' The rakshasa replied to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, 'I am Baka's brother and I am known by the name of Kirmira. Without any worries, I live in this deserted Kamyaka forest. I always defeat men in battle and then eat them up. Who are you who have appeared before me as food? Without any worries, I will defeat all of you in battle and then eat you up.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the evil-hearted one, Yudhishthira told him everything about his name and lineage. 'You may have heard about me. I am Pandu's son, Dharmaraja. I am with all my brothers, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the others. I have been robbed of my kingdom and now wish to live in this forest. It is for this reason that I have come to this terrible forest that is your territory.' Kirmira said, 'This is my good fortune. Today, after a long time, the gods have granted me the wish that I have had. With my weapons always raised, I have roamed the earth with the intention of killing Bhimasena. But I could not find him. Through good fortune, I have come upon my brother's killer, fulfilling a long-cherished desire. O king! It was he who, in the disguise of a brahmana, killed my beloved brother Baka in Vetrakriyagriha.[5] Bhima has no strength in his chest. Therefore, he resorted to the strength of skills. My friend Hidimba used to live in the forest. He was earlier killed by this evil-hearted one and he then abducted his[6] sister. That fool has now come to me in this deep forest in the middle of the night, at a time when we roam around. Today, I will wreak the vengeance that I have sought for a long time. I will make large offerings of blood to Baka. Today, I will free myself of the debts I owe to my brother and to my friend. I will obtain supreme peace by removing this thorn of the rakshasas. O Yudhishthira! If Bhimasena was earlier freed from Baka, I will today devour him before your eyes. His life is long. But today, I will kill Vrikodara. I will eat him up and digest him, the way Agastya did the great asura.'[7] Having been thus addressed, Yudhishthira, devoted to the truth and with dharma in his soul, angrily censured the rakshasa, saying that this could not happen.

'"Thereupon, the mighty-armed Bhima swiftly uprooted a tree. It was ten *vyamas*[8] long. He then stripped it of its leaves. In an instant, the victorious Arjuna strung the Gandiva, with a force like that of the vajra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Restraining Jishnu, Bhima rushed at the terrible-looking rakshasa, uttering the words, 'Stay! Stay!' Having uttered these words, the angry Pandava[9] tightened the cloth around his waist. The strong one rubbed one hand against the other and bit his lips. With the tree as a weapon, Bhima dashed forward with great force. Like Maghavan[10] hurling his thunder, he brought it down, like Yama's staff, on his[11] head. But in that battle, the rakshasa could be seen, completely unmoved. Like flaming thunder, he hurled his blazing brand. But Bhima, supreme among warriors, kicked the brand back at the rakshasa with his left foot. Kirmira then suddenly uprooted a tree and rushed at the Pandava in battle, like Dandapani.[12] A battle began with trees, such that all the trees were destroyed. This was like the ancient battle between the brothers Vali and Sugriva, in their desire for the fortune.[13] Like lotuses hurled at rutting elephants, the ends of the fallen trees splintered into many fragments. In that great forest, many trees were crushed like reeds and lay scattered like rags. O lord of the earth! That fight with the trees between the chief of the rakshasas and the supreme among men lasted but an instant. Then, as Bhima stood ready to fight, the angry rakshasa hurled a rock and Bhimasena staggered. When he was numbed by the force of the rock, the rakshasa rushed at him, like Svarbhanu[14] dashing at the sun and dispersing the rays with his arms. They then grappled with each other and dragged each other in different ways. They seemed to be like two fighting bulls. The fight between them was great, violent and terrible, like that between two proud tigers armed with fangs and claws.

'"Vrikodara was proud of the strength of his arms. He saw Krishna's eyes look towards him and remembered Duryodhana's oppression. His vigour increased. Intolerantly, he grabbed him in his arms, like an elephant whose rutting glands having burst, falls upon another elephant. In turn, the mighty rakshasa also grasped him. But Bhimasena, supremely strong among the strong ones, violently threw him down. As those two mighty warriors tried to crush each other with their arms in that battle, a terrible sound was heard, like that made by shattering bamboo. Then Vrikodara forcibly threw him down. Grabbing him by the waist, he shook him, like a violent wind shakes a tree. Having been thus seized by the mighty Bhima in battle, he weakened. But though he trembled and panted, he still dragged the Pandava. Noticing that he was exhausted, Vrikodara entwined him in his arms, like an animal is tied with ropes. Uttering a loud roar, like that of a broken war drum, the strong one whirled him around repeatedly, until his body was swollen and unconscious. Knowing that the rakshasa was exhausted, Pandu's son swiftly grasped him in his arms and then killed him like an animal. Vrikodara placed his knee on the evil rakshasa's hips and placing his hands on his throat, began to press down. Then, when his entire body was numb and his wide-open eyes were glazed, he hurled him on the ground and said, 'O evil one! You will no longer have to shed tears over Hidimba and Baka. You too have proceeded to Yama's abode.'

Having said this, that supreme warrior among men looked at the rakshasa, his eyes wide with rage. He discarded the swollen body that no longer had life and was empty of mind with its garments and ornaments strewn about.

'"When the one with the form of a cloud was slain, those sons of the Indra among men[15] placed Krishna at the forefront. They praised Bhima for his many qualities and in a happy frame of mind, set out for the forest of Dvaita.[16] O lord of men! O Kourava! Thus it was that, on Dharmaraja's instructions, Kirmira was killed in battle by Bhimasena. Having freed the forest of its thorn, the undefeated king,[17] knowledgeable in dharma, lived there with Droupadi and made it his home. Consoling Droupadi, all those bulls of the Bharata lineage affectionately praised Vrikodara, with happiness in their minds. After the rakshasa had been destroyed through the strength of Bhima's arms, those warriors entered the peaceful forest that had been freed of its thorn. Passing along that road, I myself saw the evil-hearted and fearful body strewn in that great forest, killed through Bhima's strength. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! From the brahmanas who had assembled there, I heard the account of Bhima's exploit."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard this account about the killing of that supreme rakshasa, Kirmira, in battle, the king[18] seemed thoughtful and sighed, as if in sorrow.'

Section Thirty-One

Kairata Parva

This section has 1150 shlokas and thirty chapters.

Chapter 310(13): 120 shlokas
Chapter 311(14): 17 shlokas
Chapter 312(15): 22 shlokas
Chapter 313(16): 23 shlokas
Chapter 314(17): 33 shlokas
Chapter 315(18): 24 shlokas
Chapter 316(19): 33 shlokas
Chapter 317(20): 27 shlokas
Chapter 318(21): 38 shlokas
Chapter 319(22): 30 shlokas
Chapter 320(23): 51 shlokas
Chapter 321(24): 16 shlokas
Chapter 322(25): 26 shlokas
Chapter 323(26): 18 shlokas
Chapter 324(27): 25 shlokas
Chapter 325(28): 37 shlokas
Chapter 326(29): 35 shlokas
Chapter 327(30): 50 shlokas
Chapter 328(31): 42 shlokas
Chapter 329(32): 40 shlokas
Chapter 330(33): 58 shlokas
Chapter 331(34): 85 shlokas
Chapter 332(35): 21 shlokas
Chapter 333(36): 34 shlokas
Chapter 334(37): 41 shlokas
Chapter 335(38): 45 shlokas
Chapter 336(39): 30 shlokas
Chapter 337(40): 61 shlokas
Chapter 338(41): 26 shlokas
Chapter 339(42): 42 shlokas

Kiratas, as mentioned earlier, are mountain-dwellers who make a living through hunting. This section is so named because Shiva assumed the form of a kirata and fought with Arjuna.

310(13)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing that the Pandavas were tormented by misery, the Bhojas, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas assembled together and went to them in the great forest. The heirs of Panchala,[1] Dhrishtaketu the king of Chedi and the extremely valorous Kekaya brothers, famous in the world, went to meet the Parthas in the forest, full of anger and intolerance. They censured the sons of Dhritarashtra and asked, "What will we do?" All those bulls among the kshatriyas placed Vasudeva at their forefront.

They surrounded Dharmaraja Yudhishthira and seated themselves around him. Vasudeva said, “The earth will drink the blood of Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-souled Shakuni and Duhshasana as the fourth. After that, all of us will instate Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. Those deceitful ones deserve to be slain. This is eternal dharma.” Out of his preference for the Parthas, Janardana was angered. Since it seemed as though he would burn down all beings, Arjuna pacified him. On witnessing Keshava’s[2] rage, Phalguna[3] recited the deeds the great-souled one had performed in his earlier bodies.[4]

‘He is the one whose deeds are true, the man who cannot be measured, but whose energy is truly infinite. He is the lord of the Prajapatis and the intelligent Vishnu, lord of the worlds. Arjuna said, “O Krishna! In ancient times, you roamed in Mount Gandhamadana for ten thousand years, as a sage who had no abode.[5] O Krishna! In ancient times, you lived in the region of Pushkara for eleven thousand years, surviving on water alone. O Madhusudana! With your arms raised, standing on one leg and surviving only on air you spent one hundred years in the vast region of Badari.[6] O Krishna! You took off your upper garments and you were so thin that you seemed to be held by your veins. You lived on the banks of the Sarasvati for the sacrifice that went on for twelve years. O Krishna! O immensely energetic one! You went to the sacred pilgrimage of Prabhasa, known to all pure ones, and stood there on one leg for one thousand divine years, practising austerities and observing rites. O Keshava! You are the supreme soul of all beings, their beginning and their end. O Krishna! You are the store of all austerities and sacrifices and you are the eternal one. O Krishna! You killed Naraka, famous as Bhoumya, the one with the earrings.[7] You performed the first horse sacrifice. O bull among all the worlds! Having accomplished this deed, you became victorious over all the worlds. When all the daityas and danavas assembled together, you killed them in battle. O mighty-armed Keshava! You then gave lordship over everything to Shachi’s husband.[8] You then manifested yourself in the world of men. O scorcher of enemies! You were Narayana and then you became Hari.[9] You then became Brahma, Soma,[10] Surya, Dharma, Dhata,[11] Yama, Anala,[12] Vayu,[13] Vaishravana,[14] Rudra, Kala,[15] the sky, the earth and the directions. You are without birth. You are the preceptor of everything that moves and is still. You are the creator. You are the supreme being. O Krishna! You are the original god. In the forest of Chitraratha, you performed the *turayana* sacrifice[16] and other sacrifices, donating large amounts of alms. You have great energy. O Janardana! At each sacrifice, you apportioned out one hundred times, according to the share, a hundred thousand gold pieces. O beloved of the Yadavas![17] You have been Aditi’s son. O illustrious one! You are now famous as Vishnu, Indra’s younger brother.[18] O scorcher of enemies! O Krishna! While you were only a child, you

used your energy to cover heaven, sky and earth in three steps.[19] You have attained heaven. You ride the sky seated in the sun's chariot. You are the soul of all beings. Through your radiance, you are brighter than the sun. The Mouravas and the Pashas have been destroyed.[20] Nisunda and Naraka have been killed and the road to the city of Pragjyotisha has become safe again. Ahuti was killed at Jaruthi. Kratha, Shishupala and his followers, Bhimasena,[21] Shaibya and Shatadhanva have been conquered. Your chariot is as resplendent as the sun and roars like the cloud. Riding on that, you defeated Rukmi in battle and obtained your queen from the Bhojas.[22] In your anger, you killed Indradyumna and the yavana Kasheruman. You have killed Shalva, the lord of Soubha, and you brought down Soubha itself. On the banks of the Iravati, you killed Bhoja, who was the equal of Kartavirya in battle. You also killed Gopati and Talaketu. O Janardana! You journeyed to the ocean and made Dvaraka, sacred, prosperous and loved by the rishis, your own.[23] O Madhusudana! O Dasharha![24] You show no anger, no jealousy and no falsehood. No cruelty or crookedness is established in you. O Achyuta![25] You are seated in the centre of the mind, radiant in your own energy. The rishis come to you there and ask for freedom from fear.[26] O Madhusudana! You gather up all beings at the end of a yuga.[27] O scorcher of enemies! You withdraw the entire universe into yourself and remain alone. No other one in the past has performed such deeds, nor will they in the future. O immensely radiant god! Such are the deeds you performed even when a child. O Pundarikaksha! Such are the deeds you performed with Baladeva's help. You lived in the abode of Vairaja[28] with Brahma himself." Having thus spoken, the great-souled Pandava, who was like Krishna's soul himself, fell silent.

'Janardana then spoke to Partha, "You are mine and I am yours. All that is mine is yours too. He who hates you also hates me. He who follows you also follows me. O invincible one! You are Nara and I am Hari Narayana. We are the rishis Nara and Narayana, born from that world in this world. O Partha! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are no other than I. I am no other than you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one can know any difference that exists between us." In that assembly of warriors, the kings became agitated. Panchali, surrounded by her valiant brothers, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, went to Pundarikaksha, who was seated with the Yadavas. Krishna[29] sought refuge with the one who is all refuge and uttered these words.

'"It has been said that when all the beings were first created, you were the only Prajapati.[30] Asita–Devala have said that you are the creator of all beings. O invincible one! O Madhusudana! You are Vishnu. You are the sacrifice. You are the sacrificer. You are the one for whom sacrifices are performed. Jamadagni's son[31] has said this. O supreme being! The rishis have said that you are forgiveness and the truth. Kashyapa

has said that you are the sacrifice born from the truth. Narada has said that you are the supreme lord of the Sadhyas and the gods. O lord of prosperity! You are the creator of the worlds and you are the lord of the worlds. O lord! The sky is covered with your head and the earth with your feet. You are the stomach of all these worlds and you are the eternal being. You are the supreme one among all the rishis who burn with learning and austerities, who have purified their souls with asceticism and who have become content through contemplating their own souls. O supreme being! You are the refuge of all the rajarshis, the performers of pure deeds who withdraw from the field of battle[32] and who have the knowledge of every dharma. You are the lord. You are omnipresent. You are the soul of all beings. You are the earth. You are eternal. The rulers of all the worlds, the stars, the ten directions, the sky, the moon, the sun and the worlds are all established in you. O mighty-armed one! The mortality of all beings, the immortality of the dwellers of heaven and all the deeds of the worlds are established in you. O Madhusudana! Because of my love for you, I will tell you the account of my sorrows. You are the lord of all beings, be they divine or human. O Krishna! O lord! I am a wife to the Parthas. I am your friend. I am Dhrishtadyumna's sister. How could someone like me be dragged to the sabha? I was then in the dharma of women.[33] I was trembling. I was stained with blood. I was clad in a single garment. I was miserable. But I was dragged into that assembly of Kurus. On seeing me in that sabha, in the middle of all those kings, stained in my menses, those evil-minded sons of Dhritarashtra laughed at me. O Madhusudana! They wished to enjoy me like a slave girl, when the sons of Pandu, the Panchalas and the Vrishnis were still alive. O Krishna! According to dharma, am I not the daughter-in-law of both Bhishma and Dhritarashtra? But I was forcibly made a slave. The Pandavas may be extremely strong and supreme in war. But I censure them. They looked on when their famous wife, according to dharma, was molested. O Janardana! Shame on Bhimasena's strength! Shame on Partha's Gandiva! Both of them allowed me to be oppressed by insignificant ones. The eternal path of dharma is always followed by the righteous ones. The husband, however weak he may be, must protect his wife. When the wife is protected, the offspring are protected. When the offspring are protected, one's own soul is protected. One's own self is born in one's wife and that is the reason she is called *jaya*.[34] A wife should also protect her husband because he is born in her womb. The Pandavas never abandon someone who has sought refuge, but they abandoned me when I sought refuge. Five immensely energetic sons have been born to me from my husbands. O Janardana! For their sake too, I should have been rescued. Prativindhya was born from Yudhishthira, Sutasoma was born from Vrikodara, Shrutakirti was born from Arjuna, Shatanika was born from Nakula and Shrutakarma was born from the youngest.[35] All of them derive valour from the truth. O Krishna! They are maharathas like Pradyumna and you. They are supreme archers. Enemies cannot vanquish them in

battle. Why did they tolerate the weak sons of Dhritarashtra? Having been deprived of their kingdom in violation of dharma, all of them became slaves, when, in my menses, I was dragged into the sabha in a single garment. O Madhusudana! Even when strung, the Gandiva cannot be handled by anyone other than Bhima, Arjuna and you. O Krishna! Shame on Bhimasena's strength and shame on Partha's Gandiva, if Duryodhana lives for more than an instant! O Madhusudana! A long time ago, when they were but children engaged in studying and observance of rites, he threw the non-violent ones and their mother out of the kingdom. It was that evil one who mixed freshly collected, hair raising and virulent poison in Bhimasena's food. O Janardana! O supreme being! O mighty-armed one! He digested it with his food and without any effects, because his time had not ended. O Krishna! Vrikodara was safely asleep in Pramanakoti. It was he[36] who tied him up, flung him into the Ganga and went away. Though fettered, the mighty-armed and immensely strong Kounteya Bhimasena tore off his bonds and arose from the water. O Krishna! It was he[37] who caused virulent serpents to bite him[38] all over his body when he slept, but that destroyer of enemies did not die. On waking up, Kounteya killed all the serpents and he killed his[39] favourite charioteer with the back of his hand. Once again, when they were asleep and unconscious with the arya lady[40] in Varanavata, he[41] tried to burn them. Who could have acted in this way? It was then that the frightened and weeping arya lady, greatly oppressed and surrounded by flames, told the Pandavas, 'I am slain. How will we find peace from the flames today? Without a protector, I will perish with my young sons.' The mighty-armed Bhima Vrikodara's valour is like the force of the wind. He comforted the arya lady and his brothers. 'I will rise up like the bird Garuda, Vinata's son and supreme among birds. I will fly up and we need not be afraid.' He took up the arya lady on his left lap and the king[42] on his right. He took the twins on his shoulder and Bibhatsu on his back. Grasping all of them, the valorous one suddenly arose with force and the powerful one freed the arya lady and his brothers from the fire. Setting out in the night with their mother, all those famous ones arrived in the great forest, near the forest that was Hidimba's. They were tired and extremely unhappy and fell asleep with their mother. When they were asleep, a rakshasa woman named Hidimba arrived.[43] That fortunate one firmly placed Bhima's feet on her lap and happily caressed them with her soft hands. The broad-souled and strong Bhima, whose valour is his truth, then woke up and asked, 'O unblemished one! What do you desire here?' Having heard this conversation, the worst of rakshasas arrived. He was terrible to look at, his form was terrible and he let loose a loud roar. 'O Hidimba! Whom are you talking to? Bring him to me and I will eat him up. Do not delay.' But she was moved by compassion in her heart. The intelligent and unblemished lady felt pity. Then the man-eating terrible rakshasa uttered fearful roars and with great force, rushed at Bhimasena. Angered, the immensely strong rakshasa grasped

Bhimasena's hand with his own hand and with great force. Making his hand as firm as Indra's thunder, like the vajra, he suddenly struck Bhimasena with his hand. His hand having been seized by the rakshasa's hand, the mighty-armed Vrikodara could not bear it and became angry. Then a terrible fight waged between Bhima and Hidimba. They were both skilled in the use of all weapons and this was as terrible as that between Vritra and Vasava.[44] Having killed Hidimba, Bhima left with his brothers, placing Hidimba[45] at the forefront. Ghatotkacha was born from her. Then, accompanied by their mother and surrounded by many brahmanas, those famous ones went towards Ekachakra. On this journey, Vyasa, always devoted to their welfare, was their adviser. The Pandavas, rigid in their vows, arrived in Ekachakra. There they killed an immensely strong maneater named Baka, who was as strong as Hidimba. Having killed him, Bhima, supreme among warriors, went with his brothers to Drupada's capital. O Krishna! While he lived there, Savyasachi won me, just as you yourself won Bhishmaka's daughter Rukmini. O Madhusudana! Partha won me at that svayamvara, achieving a great deed that others found extremely difficult. O Krishna! We have thus suffered many difficulties and are miserable and extremely unhappy. We have Dhoumya at the forefront, but we are without the arya lady.[46] They have the valour of lions and are greater than others in courage. Why do they ignore me when I am oppressed by inferiors? I have suffered such miseries at the hands of those who are weak, evil and the performers of evil deeds. I have burnt for a long time. I was born in a great lineage through divine destiny. I am the beloved wife of the Pandavas. I am the daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. O Krishna! O Madhusudana! I am supreme among chaste ones. But I was seized by my hair, while the five who are like Indras looked on."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having uttered these words, the soft-spoken Krishna[47] wept and covered her face in her hands, soft as the bud of a lotus. On her upraised, full and well-formed breasts, marked with all the auspicious marks, Panchali showered teardrops of grief. She wiped her eyes and sighed repeatedly. In a voice choked with tears, she uttered these angry words, "O Madhusudana! I have no husbands. I have no sons. I do not have a brother or a father. Nor do I have any relatives. When I was oppressed by inferior ones, you ignored me, unmoved by sorrow. My grief that Karna laughed at me then will never be pacified." Then Krishna spoke to her in that assembly of warriors, "O beautiful one! The wives of those who have angered you will weep like this. They will see the dead bodies lying on the ground, bereft of life. Their bodies will be covered with Bibhatsu's arrows and will be drenched with blood. Do not sorrow. I will do whatever the Pandavas can do. I will make you a promise. You will be the queen of kings. The heavens may fall, the Himalayas may be rent asunder, the earth may splinter and the ocean may dry up. O Krishna! But my words will not be falsified." Dhrishtadyumna said, "I will kill Drona. Shikhandi will kill the grandfather. Bhimasena will kill Duryodhana.

Dhananjaya will kill Karna. O sweet-smiling one! With the aid of Rama[48] and Krishna, we are invincible in battle even with the slayer of Vritra,[49] not to speak of Dhritarashtra's sons." When these words were uttered, all the warriors looked towards Vasudeva and in their midst, the mighty-armed Keshava spoke these words.'

311(14)

'Vasudeva said, "O lord of the earth![50] O king! Had I been present in Dvaraka earlier, this misfortune would not have befallen you. O invincible one! Even if I had not been invited to the gambling match by the Kouravas, by Ambika's son[51] and by King Duryodhana, I would have gone and prevented the gambling by pointing out the many evils that result. I would have brought in Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Bahlika. For your sake, I would have told the king who is Vichitravirya's son,[52] 'O Kourava! O Indra among kings! O lord! Make your sons desist from this gambling.' I would have pointed out the evils through which you have been removed from your seat and through which, in earlier times, Virasena's son was deprived of his kingdom.[53] O lord of the earth! Whatever has not been eaten up[54] is destroyed through gambling. I would have described how the addiction to gambling lasts continuously. Women, gambling, hunting and drinking are four things that arise out of desire. O king! It has been said that these lead to loss of prosperity. Those who are learned in the sacred texts hold that while this is true of all of them, it can be especially seen in the case of gambling. On a single day, one may lose all one's property. Misery is certain. Wealth that has not been enjoyed is lost. Only harsh words are left. O Kouravya![55] I would have recounted these and other bitter topics. O mighty-armed one! I would have spoken to Ambika's son about these effects of gambling. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![56] If my words had been accepted by him, the dharma of the Kurus would have remained undisturbed. O Indra among kings! O best of the Bharata lineage! If he had not accepted my soft words, which are like medicine,[57] I would have restrained him through force. In similar fashion, I would have destroyed all the courtiers and gamblers, ill-wishers masquerading as well-wishers. O Kouravya! It was my absence from Anarta[58] that led to all your misfortunes from gambling. O Pandu's son! O best of the Kurus! When I reached Dvaraka, I learnt everything about your misfortunes from Yuyudhana.[59] O Indra among kings! As soon as I heard this, my mind was filled with great anxiety. O lord of the earth! I have swiftly come here, in a desire to see you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All of us are beset with great difficulties, since we find you and your brothers immersed in this misfortune."'

312(15)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Krishna! O descendant of Vrishni![60] Why were you absent? Where did you go and what did you do on your travels?”

‘Krishna replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best of men! I went to Shalva’s city Soubha to destroy it. Listen to the reasons. O best of the Bharata lineage! The valiant King Shishupala, Damaghosha’s son, immensely energetic, mighty-armed and greatly famous, was killed by me at your rajasuya sacrifice over the issue of who should be given the homage. Because of his anger, that evil-souled one did not wish to see me receive it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing that he had been killed, Shalva was filled with terrible rage. He went to the empty Dvaraka, because I was with you then. O king! He went there ascended on Soubha,[61] which could go wherever it wished. In cruel fashion, he fought with the young bulls among the Vrishnis. He slew many brave Vrishni youth and the evil-minded one destroyed all the parks in the city. The mighty-armed one then shouted, ‘Where is that wretch of the Vrishni lineage? Where has the evil-souled Vasudeva, son of Vasudeva, gone?[62] He is desirous of doing battle and I will destroy his pride in battle. O Anartas![63] Tell me truthfully where he is, and I will go there. I will return after killing the slayer of Kamsa and Keshi. I truthfully swear on my weapons that I will not return without killing him. Where is he? Where is he? The lord of Soubha wished to fight me in battle and rushed around, from one place to another. That mean one has performed an evil deed. He is treacherous. I am angry at the killing of Shishupala. I will send him to Yama’s abode today. Through his evil nature, he has killed my brother Shishupala, lord of the earth.[64] I will kill him on the ground. Though a king, my brother was only a child. He wasn’t killed in proper battle. The brave one was killed when he wasn’t ready. I will kill Janardana.’ O great king! Thus did he lament.

‘“O descendant of the Kuru lineage![65] Thus abusing me, he took to the sky on Soubha, which is capable of going wherever it wishes. O Kouravya! On returning there, I learnt everything that the evilminded and evil-souled king of Marttikavata had said about me. O Kouravya! O king! With eyes red with rage, I made up my mind. I resolved in my mind to kill him. O Kourava! I heard about his oppression of Anarta, his abuse of me, his great insolence and his evil deeds. O lord of the earth! I therefore left to destroy Soubha. When I was looking for him, I found him whirling in the ocean. O king! I blew on Panchajanya,[66] which had been obtained from the water, and challenging Shalva to battle, got ready. At that time, a terrible battle took place between me and the danavas there. They were all vanquished and laid low on the ground by me. O mighty-armed one! It was this task that kept me from coming to you in Hastinapura then, though I had heard about the terrible gambling match.”’

313(16)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Vasudeva! O mighty-armed one! O immensely intelligent one! Tell me in detail about the destruction of Soubha, because I am not satisfied with what you have said.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O best of the Bharata lineage! When he heard that the mighty-armed King Shroutashrava[67] had been killed by me, Shalva marched on the city of Dvaravati. O Pandu’s son![68] The evil-minded Shalva laid siege to the city from every side, arranged his battle formations and stationed himself in the air.[69] That lord of the earth fought with the city from there. He attacked from everywhere and the battle began. O best of the Bharata lineage! O king! The city was ready everywhere, with flags, gates, troops, fences, machines, miners, barricaded streets, turrets, towers, hair-graspers,[70] catapults that hurled flaming missiles, water vessels,[71] kettledrums, musical instruments, army drums, kindling, straw, grass, shataghnis,[72] ploughs, bhushundis, rocks, clubs, weapons, battleaxes, iron shields and machines that hurled fire and iron. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything was in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. There was a stock of many types of objects and it was guarded by Gada, Samba, Uddhava and the like. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! They were men capable of repulsing attacks. There were warriors from famous lineages, their valour having been witnessed in battle. The middle and upper parts of the fortifications were protected well and the upper parts had cavalry and infantry. Ugrasena, Uddhava and the others announced in the city that no one should drink, so that there should not be carelessness in protection. Knowing that they would be killed by King Shalva if they were intoxicated, all the Vrishnis and the Andhakas remained sober. The guards entrusted with the treasuries of Anarta swiftly drove out all the actors, dancers and singers. O Kouravya! The bridges were destroyed. All the boats were forbidden to ply. The moats were fortified with spikes. O best of the Kuru lineage! Because of the impending war, the reservoirs were destroyed. For a krosha[73] on every side, the ground was made uneven.[74] O unblemished one! Our fortress is naturally difficult to access. It is guarded well by nature. Nature has equipped it with special types of weapons. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was protected well. That city was stocked with every kind of weapon, like Indra’s abode. O king! At the time when Soubha advanced, the city of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas was such that nothing could come out or go in without a seal.[75] O Kourava! O Indra among kings! Everywhere, along the roads and the open spaces where the roads meet, there were forces and many elephants and horses. O mighty-armed one! The soldiers had been paid wages and rations. They had been given weapons and armour. Nothing was pending. No one was given too little pay. No one was paid in excess. No one was shown preference. There was no one whose valour had not been tested. O king! Thus Dvaraka was prepared well. The soldiers had been paid a

lot. O lotus-eyed one! It was defended by King Ahuka.'"[76]

314(17)

'Vasudeva said, "O Indra among kings! But Shalva, the lord of Soubha, came to the city with many men, elephants and forces. The army controlled by King Shalva had four kinds of forces.[77] The army settled itself on plain ground, where there were plenty of sources of water. But the army avoided cremation grounds, temples of the gods, anthills and *chaityas*.[78] O king! The army formations were divided such that all the roads were covered and Shalva's troops encompassed all the nine slopes.[79] There was every kind of weapon and the soldiers were skilled in use of every kind of weapon. There were masses of chariots, elephants and horses, with infantry and flags. The army was well paid and well fed and bore all the marks of courage. There were colourful pennants and colourful chariots and bows. O Kouravya! O bull among men! He settled in Dvaraka, and like the king of the birds, attacked with great strength.

'"On seeing King Shalva's strength, all the young descendants[80] of the Vrishni lineage emerged, to do battle with him. O Kourava! They were unable to bear the invasion of King Shalva—Charudeshna, Samba and maharatha Pradyumna. They emerged in their chariots, all adorned in colourful attire and flags. They fought with King Shalva's warriors, who were like bulls. Samba took up his bow and in a happy frame of mind, fought with Kshemavriddhi, Shalva's adviser and the general of his army. O best of the Bharata lineage! Just as the one with one thousand eyes[81] unleashes rain, Jambavati's son[82] unleashed a great volley of arrows. O great king! Stationary like the Himalayas, the general Kshemavriddhi withstood that terrible shower of arrows. O Indra among kings! Then, using his powers of maya, Kshemavriddhi unleashed a greater net of arrows on Samba. But Samba tore apart that net of maya with his own maya and showered one thousand arrows on his[83] chariot. Samba pierced the general Kshemavriddhi and oppressed by Samba's arrows, he fled on his swift horses. When Shalva's cruel general fled, a powerful daitya named Vegavan attacked my son. O Indra among kings! O king! But Samba is the extender of the Vrishni lineage. Though Vegavan attacked him with force, the brave one withstood it. O Kounteya! The brave Samba, whose valour is based on truth, swiftly hurled a fast club at Vegavan. O king! Struck by it, Vegavan fell down on the ground, like a giant tree, rotten at the roots, collapses when struck by the wind. When that brave and giant asura was killed by the club, my son entered the enemy's large army and began to fight. O great king! The danava Vivindhya was a maharatha and a great archer. O king! He then began to fight with Charudeshna and a terrible duel ensued between Charudeshna and Vivindhya, like that between Vritra and Vasava[84] in ancient times. O great king! Enraged with each other,

they shot arrows at each other and roared like mighty lions. Rukmini's son[85] then fixed a great weapon to his bow and chanted mantras over it. Its radiance was like that of the sun and it was capable of destroying the enemy. O king! In great rage, my son, the maharatha, challenged Vivindhya and let loose his weapon. The asura fell down dead.

'"On seeing Vivindhya dead and his army agitated, Shalva returned again on Soubha, which could go anywhere at will. Then the entire army of the residents of Dvaraka was alarmed, when they saw the mighty-armed Shalva arrive on earth in Soubha.[86] O Kounteya! O great king! Then Pradyumna came out and reassembled the army. He told the inhabitants of Anarta, 'All of you stay where you are and all of you watch me fight. In this battle, I will repel with force Soubha and its king. O Yadavas! Today I will destroy the soldiers of the lord of Soubha, using my hands to let loose iron weapons, that are like serpents, from my bow. Be reassured and do not be scared. Soubha's king will be destroyed. Attacked by me, the evil-souled one will be destroyed, together with Soubha.' O descendant of the Pandu lineage![87] When Pradyumna thus spoke with a happy heart, the brave warriors stood where they were and happily, began to fight again."'

315(18)

'Vasudeva said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! After having uttered these words to the Yadavas, Rukmini's son[88] ascended his golden chariot. It was yoked to tawny horses and the ornamented flag had a *makara*,[89] with its jaws gaping open. The mighty-armed one, best among archers, dashed at the enemy on swift horses that seemed to fly through the sky. The great bow roared when he strung it and the warrior held quivers and a sword, with his arms and fingers clad in armour. With lightning speed, he switched the bow from one hand to another and the daityas and all the residents of Soubha were confused. As he shot an arrow and fixed another one to his bow repeatedly, it was impossible to see a gap and the enemies were continuously killed in battle. The colour of his face did not change. There was no trembling of his body. All the worlds heard the sound of his wonderful valour, as he roared like a lion. The aquatic animal[90] that oppressed all fishes was on his golden flag-post, its jaws wide open, adorning the chariot. It created terror among the chief soldiers in Shalva's army. O king! Pradyumna, the destroyer of enemies, then rushed with great speed and attacked Shalva, who also wished to fight with him.

'"O extender of the Kuru lineage! Attacked by the brave Pradyumna in that great battle, Shalva was enraged and could not bear it. He was mad with anger and began to do battle with Pradyumna. Shalva, the destroyer of enemy cities, descended from the chariot that could go anywhere at will. A terrible battle then raged between Shalva and the warrior from the Vrishnis. All the worlds watched it, like that between Bali and

Vasava.[91] That brave one[92] knew the use of maya and ascended a chariot that was ornamented with gold. It had a flag, a flagstaff and an undercarriage and was stocked with quivers. O Kouravya! O lord! Ascending that supreme chariot, that illustrious and immensely strong one, unleashed arrows at Pradyumna. At that, Pradyumna also used the speed of his arms to bewilder Shalva with a shower of arrows. Thus attacked in battle, the king of Soubha could not bear it. He discharged arrows at my son that were like blazing fire. O Indra among kings! Having been pierced by Shalva's arrows, Rukmini's son swiftly unleashed an arrow that could seek out the heart in battle. This arrow shot by my son pierced his armour. The feathered shaft pierced his heart and he fell down unconscious. When the brave King Shalva fell down unconscious, all the lords among the danavas ran away, cleaving the earth.[93] O lord of the earth! O king! Lamentations arose in Shalva's army, on seeing the lord of Soubha felled and deprived of his senses.

'"O Kouravya! But he regained his consciousness and arose. Then that immensely strong one suddenly unleashed an arrow at Pradyumna. Though the mighty-armed Pradyumna was pierced, he remained steady in battle. But he was struck around his collarbone and the brave one sank down on his chariot. O great king! Thus piercing Rukmini's son,[94] Shalva uttered a loud roar like a lion and it resounded through the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thereupon, when my son was senseless, he swiftly again shot many arrows at him, which were difficult to repulse. O best of the Kouravas! Struck by these many arrows and deprived of his senses, Pradyumna was helpless in the field of battle."'

316(19)

'Vasudeva said, "When Pradyumna, supreme among strong ones, had been struck down by Shalva's arrows, the Vrishnis who had come to fight lost their calm and their resolution. Lamentations then arose in the army of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. O king! The enemies were delighted at Pradyumna's fall. Having seen him lose his senses, his trained charioteer Daruki[95] used his swift horses to take him away from the field of battle. The chariot hadn't gone very far, when that supreme of warriors regained his senses.

'"He grasped his bow and spoke thus, 'O Souti![96] What have you done? Why are you turning back? This is not the dharma of Vrishni warriors in battle. O Souti! Have you lost your senses at the sight of Shalva in that great battle? Are you unhappy on witnessing that battle? Tell me exactly.' Souti replied, 'O Janardana's son! I am not bewildered. Nor am I overcome with fear. O son of Keshava![97] But I think that you will find Shalva too difficult. O brave one! I am therefore retreating slowly. This evil one is powerful. When a warrior is knocked unconscious on the chariot, it is the charioteer's

duty to protect him. Your life must always be protected by me, just as you always protect me. Thinking that a warrior must always be protected, I am taking you away. O mighty-armed one! You are alone. The danavas are many. O Rukmini's son! Thinking that this is not an equal battle, I am taking you away.' O Kouravya! The charioteer thus spoke to the one with the makara on his flag.

'"And he[98] said, 'O Suta! Turn the chariot back again. O Daruka's son! Never act in this way again. O Souti! Never retreat from a field of battle while I am still alive. One who has born in the Vrishni lineage never goes back on a word he has given and never kills an enemy who has fallen or has surrendered. Nor does he kill a woman, an aged one or a child, or one who has lost his chariot or his weapons, or is bewildered. You have been born in the suta lineage and you are well trained in the tasks of sutas. O Daruka's son! You know the dharma of Vrishnis in battle. O Souti! Since you know the conduct of Vrishnis in battle, you will never again, no matter what the situation is, leave the field of battle. What will Gada's elder brother, the invincible Madhava, tell me when he sees that I have been frightened and have fled the field of battle, struck by weapons on my back? The mighty-armed Baladeva, who is dressed in blue and is Keshava's elder brother, is addicted to wine. What will he say when he returns? O Suta! Sini's grandson[99] is a great archer and a lion among men? What will he say when he hears I have fled from battle? What will the victorious Samba say, or the invincible Charudeshna, or Gada, or Sarana? O charioteer! What will the mighty-armed Akrura tell me? The wives of the Vrishni warriors have always considered me brave, honourable, virtuous and manly. When they get together, what will they say? They will say, "Pradyumna is frightened and retreats from the great battle. Shame on him!" They will never say, "Well done!" O Souti! To a person like me, shame with ridicule is worse than death. Therefore, never withdraw again. Before he left for the sacrifice of the infinitely energetic Partha, lion among the Bharata lineage, Hari, the killer of Madhu, left this burden on me. O son of a suta! When the brave Kritavarma was about to come out to face Shalva, I restrained him, saying that he should refrain and that I would stop him. Because of his respect for me, Hridika's son[100] desisted. What will I tell the maharatha after abandoning the field of battle? What will I tell Pundarikaksha,[101] the mighty-armed and invincible man who wields the conch shell, the chakra and the club, when he returns? What will I tell Satyaki, Baladeva and the other Andhakas and Vrishnis, who have always taken pride in me? O Souti! Having abandoned the field of battle, with arrows piercing my back and having been carried away unconscious by you, I do not wish to live any longer. O Daruka's son![102] Turn the chariot back at once. Never act in this way again, not even if disaster looms. O Souti! After having fled the field of battle in fright and with arrows piercing my back, I do not think life is worth living. O son of a suta! Have you ever seen me suffer from fear, or flee from the field of battle like a

coward? O Daruka's son! As long as I desired to fight, you should not have left the field of battle. Therefore, return to the field of battle.'"'

317(20)

'Vasudeva said, "Having been thus addressed, on that field of battle, the son of a suta then spoke to Pradyumna in soft and placating words, 'O Rukmini's son! I am not afraid to drive horses in battle. I know the conduct of the Vrishnis in battle and it is not different from what you have said. But it has been said that the duty of charioteers is to always protect the life of the warrior. And you were greatly afflicted. O hero! You were badly pierced through the arrows unleashed by Shalva. You had also lost consciousness and that is the reason I retreated. O foremost among the Satvatas! O son of Keshava![103] Now that you have regained your senses, in accordance with your wishes, you will see my skill in handling horses. I have been born from Daruka and I have been trained by him. Without any fear, I will now penetrate Shalva's great army.' O brave one! Having uttered these words, he tugged at the reins of the horses and drove them speedily. He drove them in circular motions, withdrawing them and releasing them again. In beautiful motions, the horses turned to the left and to the right, and everywhere. O king! Controlled by the reins, those supreme horses seemed to fly through the sky. O king! Knowing Daruki's light touch of hand, it seemed that the horses were on fire, but did not touch the ground with their feet. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He wheeled around Shalva's army so easily from the right that those who witnessed it thought that it was extraordinary.

'"Unable to tolerate this penetration by Pradyumna from the right, the king of Soubha suddenly unleashed three arrows at the charioteer. But Daruka's son gave no thought to these swift arrows. O mighty-armed one! He continued to drive the horses. Then the king of Soubha once again shot many arrows at my brave son, Rukmini's son.[104] But before they could strike, Rukmini's son, the destroyer of enemy warriors, exhibited his lightness of touch and smilingly, sliced them off with his own sharp arrows. On seeing all his arrows sliced down by Pradyumna, the king of Soubha resorted to the terrible maya of the asuras and unleashed his arrows. Knowing that daitya weapons had been released, he[105] sliced them off by unleashing enormously powerful brahma arrows. Those weapons always drink the blood of others and driving the other weapons away,[106] pierced him[107] in the head, chest and face, so that he was knocked down unconscious. Thus, oppressed by arrows, the mean Shalva fell down. So as to destroy the enemy, Rukmini's son fixed another supreme arrow. All the bulls of the Dasharhas used to worship this arrow, which was as radiant as the sun and the fire. On seeing it fixed to the bow, sounds of lamentation were heard in the sky. All the masses of gods, together with Indra and the lord of riches,[108] sent Narada and the immensely strong god of the

wind. These two went to Rukmini's son and delivered the message of the gods, 'O brave one! You should never kill King Shalva. Restrain the arrow, because he is not to be killed by you in battle. There is no man who cannot be killed by this arrow. O mighty-armed one! But it has been destined by the creator that he will be killed in battle by Devaki's son[109] Krishna and that should not become false.' At that, Pradyumna was extremely delighted and withdrew that supreme arrow from the excellent bow and returned it to the quiver. O Indra among kings! Then Shalva arose, in an extremely miserable frame of mind. Oppressed by Pradyumna's arrows, he swiftly retreated with his troops. O Indra among kings! Vanquished by the Vrishnis, the cruel one left Dvaraka. He ascended Soubha and went up into the sky."'

318(21)

'Vasudeva said, "O king! When your great rajasuya sacrifice was over, I returned to the city of Anarta after he had left it. O great king! I saw that Dvaraka had been robbed of its splendour. Studying and recitations had ceased. Beautiful women were bereft of ornaments. The forms of the gardens of Dvaraka were such that they could no longer be recognized. Alarmed at this, I asked Hridika's son,[110] 'O tiger among men! Why do the men and women of the Vrishni lineage look distressed? What has happened? I wish to hear all about it.' O supreme among kings! On being thus addressed, Hridika's son told me everything in detail, about the siege by Shalva and its relief. O best of the Kuru lineage! When I heard about everything in its entirety, I immediately made up my mind to kill King Shalva. O best of the Bharata lineage! I reassured the citizens of the city and also King Ahuka[111] and Anakadundubhi.[112] Smilingly, I spoke to all the chiefs among the Vrishnis, 'O bulls of the Yadava lineage! Always be careful in tending to the city. Know that I will leave to go and destroy King Shalva. I will not return to the city of Dvaravati without killing him. You will again see me after I have destroyed Shalva and the city of Soubha. Strike the three beats on the kettledrum that enemies find so terrible.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus been appropriately reassured by me, all the warriors happily told me to go and destroy the enemies. The delighted warriors blessed me and said farewell. The best of the brahmanas uttered benedictions over me and I bowed my head before Ahuka. Then I yoked Sainya and Sugriva to my chariot and drove away, the directions thundering with the roar. O king! I blew on Panchajanya, my supreme conch shell, as I left. O tiger among men! I departed with a large army that I had gathered. It had the four kinds of forces and shone with the radiance of victory.

'"I passed over many countries, mountains with many trees in them, lakes and rivers, until I reached Marttikavata. O tiger among men! I learnt there that Shalva had left the city on Soubha. But I followed after him. O destroyer of enemies! Having reached the bay of the ocean where large waves billow, I found Shalva on Soubha, in the middle of

the ocean.[113] O Yudhisthira! Having seen me from a distance, the evil-souled one challenged me again and again to a battle. Then many arrows were shot from Sharnga,[114] capable of piercing the heart. But the arrows failed to reach his city and rage engulfed me. O king! That evil-natured and invincible wretch among the daityas began to rain thousands of showers of arrows on me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He showered arrows on my soldiers, my charioteer and my horses. But without thinking about this, we continued to fight. Then the warriors who were Shalva's followers in battle shot hundreds and thousands of curved arrows[115] at me. The asuras covered my horses, my chariot and Daruka himself with arrows that were capable of piercing the heart. O brave one! At that time, I could not see the horses, the chariot, or my charioteer Daruka. My soldiers and I were invisible because of those arrows. O Kouravya! Then I also released many tens of thousands of arrows from my bow, invoking them with divine and prescribed mantras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But Soubha was one krosha up in the sky and my soldiers and I could not see the object. All of them therefore only looked on, like spectators at the enclosure of a performance. But they happily cheered me on, clapping their hands and roaring like lions. The beautiful arrows released from my bow in that great battle entered the bodies of the danavas like locusts addicted to blood. At that, sounds of wailing increased inside Soubha. Those who had been killed by those sharp arrows fell into the great ocean. Having lost their arms and their necks, they assumed the form of headless trunks. With terrible roars, the danavas continued to fall down.

'"My conch shell Panchajanya originated in the ocean. It had the colour of cow's milk, jasmine, the moon, the stalk of a lotus or silver. I filled it with my breath. On seeing them fall, Shalva, the lord of Soubha, began to fight with me in a great battle of maya. He hurled iron clubs, barbed missiles, spears, lances, battleaxes and bhushundis incessantly at me. But I grasped them and destroyed all of them through my own maya. On seeing that his maya had been destroyed, he fought with me with mountain-peaks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At one moment, it seemed as if it was night. The next instant, it seemed as if it was morning. In one instant, it was a nice day. The next instant, it was a foul day. It was cold, followed by hot. Creating such maya, the enemy fought with me. But knowing this, I destroyed all this maya with my own. At the right time in battle, I scattered all of them with my arrows. O great king! O Kounteya! Then the sky seemed to blaze forth with a hundred suns. There were a hundred moons, and suddenly, there were ten thousand stars. Neither day nor night could be detected, nor the directions. I was then bewildered and attached the *prajna*[116] weapon. That weapon blew his arrows away, as if they were cotton. Then a tumultuous battle raged, making the hair stand up. O Indra among kings! Having obtained light, I again began to fight with the enemy."'

'Vasudeva said, "O tiger among men! King Shalva, the great enemy, was engaged in battle with me and again arose into the sky. O great king! In his desire for victory, the evil-minded Shalva angrily hurled shataghnis, giant clubs, flaming lances, bludgeons and swords at me. With my fast arrows, I warded them off as they descended towards me from the sky. I sliced them into two and three parts. At that, a great uproar arose in the sky. He covered Daruka, my horses and my chariot with a hundred thousand nataparva arrows. Daruka was afflicted and spoke to me, 'O brave one! Though I am suffering from Shalva's arrows, I will stay here, because I must.' On hearing these pitiful words of my charioteer, I looked at him and saw that the charioteer had been wounded by the arrows. O best of the Pandavas! There was not a spot on his chest, his head, his torso and his two arms that had not been wounded by an arrow. Blood freely flowed from the wounds the shower of arrows had caused. He looked like a mountain of red chalk after a shower of rain. O mighty-armed one! I saw that though the charioteer still held the reins in battle, he was fatigued. He was suffering from Shalva's arrows and I cheered him.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this time, a man swiftly came to me from Dvaraka and spoke to me, in my chariot, like a well-wisher. O brave one! He was Ahuka's servant and he carried a message from him. O Yudhisthira! Listen to what he told me in a sad and breathless voice. 'O valiant one! Ahuka, the lord of Dvaraka, has sent a message for you. O Keshava! Know what your father's friend has told you. O descendant of the Vrishni lineage![117] O invincible one! While you were restrained, Shalva has attacked Dvaraka today. He has forcibly killed Shura's son.[118] O Janardana! Therefore refrain from fighting here. Your greatest task now is to defend Dvaraka.' Having heard his words, my mind was extremely distressed. I could not make up my mind about the right course of duty. O brave one! Having heard those unpleasant words, I mentally censured Satyaki, Baladeva and maharatha Pradyumna. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![119] Having entrusted the task of protecting Dvaraka and my father to them, I had come for the destruction of Soubha. How could the mighty-armed Baladeva, the destroyer of enemies, still be alive? What about Satyaki, Rukmini's son, the valiant Charudeshna and the others led by Samba? The thought made me miserable. Had those tigers among men been alive, not even the wielder of the vajra[120] himself would have been able to kill Shura's son.[121] But it was clear that Shura's son had been killed and therefore it was clear that so had the others. I presumed that all the others, with Baladeva as the chief, had also been killed. I repeatedly kept thinking about all their destruction. O great king! Though I was greatly overwhelmed, I continued to fight with Shalva. O great king! I then saw that warrior, Shura's son, himself fall from Soubha and at this, confusion overtook me. O lord of men! I saw the exact form of my father falling

down, like Yayati fell down from heaven to earth after all the merits of his good deeds had been exhausted.[122] I saw him faded, deprived of his headdress. His garments and hair were dishevelled. He could be seen falling, like a planet that has lost all its merits. O Kounteya! Then Sharnga, supreme among bows, fell down from my hand and in complete bewilderment, I sat down on my chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing me bereft of my senses, a loud wail of lamentation arose from all my army, because they could see me on my chariot, as if I had lost my life. I saw the form of my father drop like a vulture[123] from the sky, with his arms extended and his feet extended. O mighty-armed one! As he fell, powerful warriors struck at him with lances and spears in their hands. My heart began to tremble.

'"O brave one! But I regained my senses in an instant. When I did, I could no longer see Soubha, or the enemies, or Shalva in that great battle. Nor could I see my old father. I then concluded in my mind that this was certainly nothing but maya. On regaining my senses, I again began to shoot hundreds of arrows."'

320(23)

'Vasudeva said, "O best of the Bharata lineage! Then I grasped my beautiful bow and with my arrows, began to slice off the heads of the enemies of the gods who were on Soubha. From Sharnga, I unleashed excellently prepared arrows at King Shalva. They had the forms of virulent serpents, were infinitely energetic and were capable of rising to great heights. O extender of the Kuru lineage! At that time, I could no longer see Soubha. It had disappeared because of the maya and I was surprised. O great king! The masses of danavas had deformed faces and dishevelled hair. They let out a great roar as I stood there. In that great battle, with the intention of destroying them, I affixed a weapon that could only kill by sound[124] and the uproar ceased. All those danavas who had raised the uproar were killed by my arrows, which blazed like the sun and which could strike only by sound. O great king! When the noise died down in one place, it arose again in another. I then shot my arrows at the other place where the noise arose. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, the asuras raised an uproar from all the ten directions, including the side and above, but I killed them.

'"O valiant one! Soubha was capable of going anywhere at will. Having gone to Pragjyotisha,[125] it suddenly reappeared, confounding my eyes. Then a danava in the form of a monkey, a destroyer of the world, suddenly covered me with a great shower of rocks. O Indra among kings! He repeatedly tried to kill me with this shower of mountains. Covered with those mountains, I looked like an anthill. O king! Covered with all those mountains, I became completely invisible, with my horses, my charioteer and my flag. At that, the heroes from the Vrishni lineage who were part of my troops became frightened and suddenly fled in all the directions. O lord of the earth! On seeing

me in that state, when I became invisible, loud wails of lamentation were heard everywhere, in heaven, on the earth and in the sky. O king! My well-wishers were miserable in their minds and cried and wept, immersed in grief and sorrow. O brave one! O one without decay! My enemies were delighted. My friends were miserable. Later, after I had triumphed, this is what I heard. Then I took up my beloved vajra weapon. It was capable of destroying all rocks and using it, I shattered all the mountains. O great king! My horses had been oppressed by that burden of rocks and stood there trembling, weak in breath and effort. On seeing me appear like a sun in the sky after the net of clouds had dispersed, all my well-wishers repeatedly raised cheers.

'"O king! My charioteer bowed to me and with hands joined in salutation, said, 'O Varshneya! Look. Shalva, the lord of Soubha, is there. O Krishna! Do not ignore him now and take care about the task. O mighty-armed Keshava! Forget all gentleness and friendship towards Shalva. Kill Shalva. Do not allow him to live. O valiant one! O slayer of enemies! An enemy should be killed with all one's valour and even a weak enemy should not be disregarded by those who are strong, even if he is at one's feet, not to speak of one who is standing in battle. O tiger among men! O lord! Use all your efforts to kill him. O best among those of the Vrishni lineage! Do not delay any more. This one cannot be killed through gentleless. O brave one! Nor in my view can he be your friend, since he fought with you and oppressed Dvaraka.' O Kounteya! On hearing these words of my charioteer and knowing them to be true, I once again set my mind on the battle, with the intention of killing King Shalva and destroying Soubha.

'"O brave one! I asked Daruka to hold steady for an instant. I then affixed my beloved agneya weapon to my bow. It was irresistible and divine. It could not be cut and it was extremely energetic. It had great radiance and was capable of destroying everything in battle—yakshas, rakshasas, danavas and perverse kings. This great one could reduce all of them to ashes. My chakra is as sharp as a razor. It is unblemished and is like time, or Yama himself. I invoked mantras over this unmatched destroyer of enemies.[126] I asked it to destroy, with its own valour, Soubha and whatever enemies of mine were inside it. Having uttered these words, I angrily flung it, with the valour of my arms. It arose into the sky in the form of Sudarshana[127] and descended, like a second sun when the destruction of an era is near. It approached the city of Soubha, which had now lost its splendour. It sliced through the middle, just as a saw cuts through a piece of wood. Cut into two by the force of Sudarshana, Soubha fell down, like Tripura through Maheshvara's arrow.[128] When Soubha fell down, the chakra returned to my hand. I took it up once more and hurled it, saying, 'Go to Shalva.' Shalva was about to hurl a giant club in that great battle. The chakra suddenly blazed up with its energy and cut him into two. When that brave one was killed, the danavas were frightened and lost their senses. Chased by my arrows, they lamented and fled towards the sky. I then took my chariot close to Soubha. I blew on my conch shell and brought great delight into the

hearts of my well-wishers. On seeing that the city, as high as Mount Meru, had been destroyed, with all its palaces and towers, and was in flames, the women fled. Thus it was that I killed Shalva in war and destroyed Soubha. Then I again returned to Anarta and delighted my well-wishers. O king! It was because of this that I could not go to Nagasahrya.[129] O destroyer of enemy warriors! Had I been there, Suyodhana would not have been alive."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus spoken to Kourava,[130] Madhusudana, the mighty-armed Supreme Being, took his leave from the intelligent Pandavas and got ready to depart. The mighty-armed one paid his respects to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira.[131] The king and the mighty-armed Bhima inhaled the fragrance of his head.[132] He asked Subhadra and Abhimanyu to ascend his golden chariot.[133] Having been duly shown homage by the Pandavas, Krishna then ascended the chariot. Having comforted Yudhishthira, Krishna left for Dvaraka on a chariot that had the radiance of the sun and to which, Sainya and Sugriva had been yoked. When Dasharha[134] had left, Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Prishata,[135] took Droupadi's sons with him and left for his own city. After having met the Pandavas, Dhrishtaketu, the king of Chedi, took his sister with him and left for the beautiful city of Shuktimati.[136] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Kekayas also took their leave from the infinitely energetic Kounteya. Having paid their respects to all the Pandavas, they departed. Then the brahmanas and the vaishyas who lived there were also repeatedly urged to go, but they refused to abandon the Pandavas. O Indra among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those great-souled ones remained in Kamyaka and the crowd that surrounded them was large and extraordinary. Honouring the great-souled brahmanas, in due course of time, Yudhishthira instructed his servants to yoke the chariots.'

321(24)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the lord of the Dasharhas[137] had left, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna, the twins, Krishna[138] and the priest[139] ascended chariots that were extremely expensive and yoked to supreme horses. In forms that resembled that of Bhutapati,[140] the warriors left for the forest.[141] They gave golden coins, garments and cattle to those who were knowledgeable in studies, letters and mantras.[142] They were led by twenty armed servants with bows, shields, yellow arrows,[143] bowstrings, implements and arrows. All of them followed behind. Indrasena[144] swiftly collected the garments of the princess,[145] her nurses, maidservants and ornaments into another chariot and followed them.

'Then the citizens went to the best of the Kurus.[146] With dejected minds, they

circumambulated him. All the brahmanas happily pronounced their blessings, as did all the chiefs of Kurujangala. With his brothers, Dharmaraja happily greeted them back. The great-souled lord stood there for some time, to see the great numbers of people in Kurujangala. The great-souled bull among the Kurus felt for them the way a father feels for his sons. For the chief of the Bharata lineage, they too felt the way sons feel for their father. The people approached in large numbers and stood around the chief of the Kurus. They lamented, "Oh, Protector!", "Oh, dharma!" and the like, and tears rolled down all their shamed faces. "You are the supreme lord of the Kurus and we are subjects.[147] O Dharmaraja! Where are you going, leaving all the inhabitants of the cities and the countryside, like a father deserting his sons? Shame on the cruel-minded son of Dhritarashtra! Shame on the evil-minded Soubala and Karna! Those evil ones wish for destruction. O Indra among men! You are always devoted to dharma, but they harm you. O great-souled one! You have yourself established a great and unmatched city that is as radiant as a city of the gods. Shatakratuprastha is unfailing in deeds. O Dharmaraja! You are ours and where are you going, leaving us and that? Great-souled Maya built an unmatched sabha for you that was like the sabhas of the gods. It was like divine maya and had divine mysteries. O Dharmaraja! You are ours and where are you going, leaving us and that?" Then energetic Bibhatsu, learned in dharma, kama and artha, spoke in a loud voice to the gathering, "The king will make his home in the forest so as to rob the enemies of all their fame. With the brahmanas at the forefront, separately and collectively, let all the ascetics approach us and bless us. Let those who are learned in dharma and artha exactly tell us how we will attain our supreme success." O king! When these words were uttered by Arjuna, all the brahmanas and all the varnas were delighted and rejoiced. They circumambulated the one who was supreme among all those who uphold dharma.[148] They said farewell to Partha,[149] Vrikodara, Dhananjaya, Yajnaseni[150] and the twins. Then they took Yudhishthira's permission and sorrowfully returned to the kingdom, to wherever they lived.'

322(25)

Vaishampayana said, 'When they had left, Kounteya Yudhisthira, who was always wedded to the truth and had dharma in his soul, told all his brothers, "We will have to live in this deserted forest for twelve years. Look for a place in this great forest that has many deer and birds, with many flowers and fruit, beautiful and pure and frequented by virtuous men. We will happily spend these many autumns[151] there." When he had thus spoken, Dhananjaya replied to Dharmaraja, after having honoured that intelligent one like a preceptor and offering him the homage due to a preceptor. "You have worshipped the ancient maharshis. There is nothing in the world of men that is not known to you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have always worshipped brahmanas like

Dvaipayana[152] and the immensely ascetic Narada. He[153] has control over himself and always roams at the gates of all the worlds, from the world of the gods to the world of Brahma and that of gandharvas and apsaras. Without a doubt, you know the ways of all brahmanas. O lord of the earth! You know their influence and everything. O king! You yourself know what will bring us the best welfare. O great king! We will fix our abode wherever you desire. There is a lake here known as Dvaitavana. It is frequented by virtuous people. It is beautiful and has many flowers and fruit. It is frequented by many types of birds. O king! If it so pleases you, I think we can spend our twelve years here. Or do you think otherwise?" Yudhishthira said, "O Partha! I agree with what you have said. Let us go to the great, pure and famous lake of Dvaitavana." Thereupon, all the Pandavas, who always walked along the path of dharma, went to the sacred lake of Dvaitavana.

'They were accompanied by many brahmanas. There were those who observed the agnihotra, those who did not maintain the fire, those who begged for food and those who lived in the forest. Many brahmanas went with Yudhishthira. There were many hundreds of ascetics, devoted to the truth and rigid in their vows. Accompanied by many brahmanas, the Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, arrived at the sacred and beautiful Dvaitavana. It was the end of the hot season and the lord of the land saw the great forest covered with shalas, palm trees, mango trees, *madhukas*,[154] *nipas*, *kadambas*,[155] *sarjas*,[156] *arjunas*,[157] and *karnikas*.[158] There were peacocks on the tops of those large trees, uttering sweet notes and there were large numbers of *datyuhas* and *chakoras*.[159] There were also wild cuckoos in the forest. In that forest, the lord of the land also saw the leaders of large herds of elephants, which flowed with rut and stood like mountains. They were accompanied by herds of she-elephants. On approaching the beautiful Bhogavati,[160] he[161] saw many who lived in the forest with dharma in their hearts, self-controlled, attired in skins and with matted hair. He also saw many emancipated rishis. The king, foremost among those who uphold dharma, got down from his vehicle and entered the forest, with his brothers and companions, like the infinitely energetic Shakra[162] in heaven. When the one who was devoted to the truth descended, masses of charanas[163] and siddhas and dwellers of the forest approached the lion who was an Indra among men and surrounded the intelligent one. He worshipped all the siddhas and was shown homage in return, like a king or a god. With his hands joined in salutation, the supreme one among those who uphold dharma entered,[164] together with all the foremost ones among the brahmanas. The great-souled one who was pure in his conduct was worshipped like a father by the ascetics who had dharma in their hearts. Having returned the homage, the king sat down at the foot of a large tree that was laden with flowers. Dhananjaya, Krishna, Bhima, the twins, foremost among the Bharata lineage, and the followers of that Indra among men also dismounted

from their vehicles and all of them joined him. That large tree was bent with the weight of creepers and when the five great-souled Pandavas, all terrible archers, sat down, it looked like a giant mountain with herds of elephants around it.'

323(26)

Vaishampayana said, 'Those sons of Indras among men were used to pleasures. But they had now attained misfortune and reached the forest. Like Indras, they began to sport themselves in that sacred place, along the banks of the Sarasvati, with shala forests. In the forest, the king, who was a bull among Kurus, satisfied all the ascetics, sages and the best of brahmanas who were with him, by offering them the best of roots and fruit. When the Pandavas lived in that great forest, Dhoumya, their immensely energetic priest, who was like a father to the Kurus, performed sacrifices for the gods and the ancestors. Having lost their kingdom, the illustrious Pandavas lived there. While they lived there, the ancient rishi Markandeya, terrible and resplendent in his energy, arrived in their hermitage as a guest. When he saw all of them, Krishna Droupadi, Bhima and Arjuna in the middle of the ascetics, the great-souled one, infinite in his energy, remembered Rama and seemed to smile.

'Dharmaraja was miserable and said, "All these ascetics are ashamed. While all these ascetics are looking on, why do you look at me and smile, as if you are amused?" Markandeya replied, "O son! I am not delighted. Nor am I smiling. Happy pride has not possessed me. But on witnessing your misfortunes today, I have been reminded of Dasharatha's son, Rama, who was devoted to the truth. With Lakshmana, that king also lived in the forest on the instructions of his father. O Partha! In ancient times, I saw him once on Mount Rishyamukha, while he was wandering around with his bow. That great-souled one was the equal of the one with a thousand eyes,[165] the one who defeated Maya and killed Namuchi. The unblemished Dasharathi[166] lived in the forest on his father's instructions, so as to maintain his own dharma. He was like Shakra in his power, a great-hearted one who was invincible in battle. He gave up his comforts and roamed around in the forest. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. Nabhaga, Bhagiratha and other kings have conquered this earth, right up to the boundaries of the ocean. O son! They won the worlds by observing the truth. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O supreme among men! When he gave up his kingdom and his riches, the truth-abiding and virtuous king of Kashi and Karusha was called a mad dog.[167] Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Partha! O best of men! In ancient times, the righteous saptarshis who blaze in the sky observed the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Indra among men! O supreme among men! Look! Even tusked and powerful elephants, as large as

mountain peaks, base themselves in accordance with the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Indra among men! Look! All beings conduct themselves in their own species in accordance with the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Partha! You have surpassed all beings in truth, devotion to dharma, appropriate conduct and humility. Your fame and energy are as radiant as that of the sun which gives out rays. O lord of the earth! O great-minded one! After having spent a difficult time in the forest in accordance with your promise, you will again obtain blazing prosperity from the Kouravas through your own energy." Having spoken these words to him and his well-wishers in the midst of all those ascetics, the maharshi took his leave of Dhoumya and the Parthas and left from there, in a northward direction.'

324(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Pandavas lived in Dvaitavana, the giant forest was filled with brahmanas. In every direction, the lake of Dvaitavana always resounded with chants of the brahman and became like the world of Brahma. The charming chants of yajus, samas and riks, in poetry and in prose, were intoned everywhere by the brahmanas and pleased the heart. The wise intonations of the brahman mingled with the twangs of the bowstrings of the Parthas and the beautiful unity between brahmana and kshatriya practices radiated.

'One evening, when Kounteya Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was seated and surrounded by all the rishis, Dalbhya's son Baka[168] spoke to him, "O Partha! O supreme among the Kurus! Look! In Dvaitavana, the hour has come for brahmanas and ascetics to kindle their sacrificial fires. Under your protection, they are observing dharma by following secret and rigid vows—Bhrigus, Angirasas, Vasishthas, Kashyapa, the immensely fortunate Agastyas and Atreyas of supreme vows.[169] All the supreme brahmanas in the world have assembled here with you. O Partha! O Kounteya! O Kourava! With your brothers, listen to the words I am going to say to you. Brahmanas are enriched by kshatriyas and kshatriyas are enriched by brahmanas. Thus rendered strong, they burn down enemies, like fire and wind together consume the forest. O son! If you wish to win this world and the next, do not wish to remain without brahmanas. Having obtained a disciplined brahmana who knows the ways of dharma and artha, a king can eliminate his enemies. Having conducted himself in accordance with supreme dharma and having protected his subjects, Bali could find no other refuge in this world other than that of a brahmana.[170] It was because of this that the asura Virochana's son satisfied all his desires and never lacked in prosperity. Having obtained the earth through his alliance with brahmanas, he met misfortune when he began to oppress them. The earth and its

riches do not remain eternally with one from the second varna[171] who does not have a brahmana. But right up to the boundaries of the ocean, the earth pays homage to one who is instructed by a disciplined brahmana. Like an elephant without restraint[172] in battle, a kshatriya's strength declines, if it is not accompanied by brahmanas. The brahmana has unmatched insight, the kshatriya has unmatched strength. When the two are together, the entire world is delighted. Just as a great fire aided by the wind burns up dry wood, kings aided by brahmanas consume the enemy. To acquire what he has not got and to extend what he has got, an intelligent one should seek the advice of wise brahmanas. Therefore, to obtain what you have not got and to extend what you have got and to obtain the right refuge, you need a brahmana who is famous, knowledgeable in the vedas, wise and greatly learned. O Yudhishthira! Your conduct with brahmanas has always been excellent and your great fame therefore shines in all the worlds." At this, all the brahmanas showed homage to Baka Dalbhya, as he praised Yudhishthira, and they were immensely delighted. Dvaipayana, Narada, Jamadagnya, Prithushrava, Indradyumna, Bhaluki, Kritacheta, Sahasrapad, Karnashrava, Munja, Lavanashva, Kashyapa, Harita, Sthunakarna, Agniveshya, Shounaka, Ritavak, Brihadashva, Ritavasu, Urdhvareta, Vrishamitra, Suhotra, Hotravahana—these and many other brahmanas of rigid vows spoke to Ajatashatru,[173] the way rishis speak to Purandara.'[174]

325(28)

Vaishampayana said, 'One evening, the Pandavas who had gone to the forest were seated with Krishna and were talking to each other, afflicted with grief and sorrow.

'The beloved, beautiful, learned and devoted Krishna spoke these words to Dharmaraja, "There is no sorrow over us in the mind of that evil, cruel and evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.[175] O king! When you were banished to the forest with me and your brothers, attired in deerskins, the evil-hearted and evil-minded one felt no torment. The heart of that performer of evil deeds is made of iron. Thus it was that he could address harsh words to his superior, who is supreme among those who follow dharma.[176] Having reduced you, always used to comforts and undeserving of hardship, to this misfortune, that evil-souled one, that performer of evil deeds, rejoices with his well-wishers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing you leave for the forest in your deerskins, there were four among all the Kurus who did not shed any tears—Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-souled Shakuni and the cruel and evil brother Duhshasana. O supreme among those of the Kuru lineage! All the others were overcome with grief and tears rolled down from their eyes. O great king! On seeing your bed now and remembering your earlier one, I sorrow for you. You are used to comforts and do not deserve this misery. Thinking of that jewelled seat, inlaid with ivory, in the middle of that sabha and seeing this one made of kusha grass, I am consumed with grief. I have

seen you in the sabha, surrounded by kings. O king! On no longer seeing that, how can there be peace in my heart? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have seen you anointed with sandalwood paste, as radiant as the sun. On seeing you now anointed with mud, I am losing my senses. O Indra among kings! Earlier, I have seen you attired in white and expensive silk garments. I now see you dressed in tattered rags.[177] Earlier, food that catered to every kind of taste used to be taken from your house for thousands of brahmanas, on plates made out of gold. O king! O lord with all the qualities! From your house you provided food to the ascetics and the homeless. O king! Now that I can no longer see that, how can there be peace in my heart? O great king! Young cooks who wore polished earrings used to prepare and serve the best of tasty food for your brothers. I now see them in the forest, surviving on the fare of the forest. O Indra among men! They do not deserve this discomfort. My mind can find no peace. I see Bhimasena, unhappily living in the forest, immersed in thought. As time passes, are you not suffused with anger? Are you not angered to see that Bhimasena has to perform all these tasks himself? How can your anger not increase on seeing that one who is used to happiness is now in misery? He was served in many ways, the high and the low, with vehicles and garments. How can your anger not increase on seeing him in the forest thus? That powerful lord could have killed all the Kurus, but honouring your promise, Vrikodara tolerated everything. This two-armed Arjuna is the equal of the many-armed Arjuna.[178] In the speed with which he discharges arrows, he is like Yama, the destroyer. O great king! Through the power of his weapons, all the lords of the earth were forced to bow down at your sacrifice, tended to by brahmanas. This tiger among men has been worshipped by the gods and the demons. Look at Arjuna, immersed in thought. O king! How can your anger not increase? Partha is used to comforts and does not deserve this unhappiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him in the forest thus, I am confounded that your anger does not increase. On a single chariot, he defeated gods, men and serpents. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? Through force, this scorcher of enemies obtained tribute from all the lords of the earth—extraordinarily constructed vehicles, horses and elephants. Shooting one swift arrow, he created five hundred arrows. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? Nakula is tall, dark and young and wields the best of shields in battle. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? O Yudhishthira! You have seen Madri's handsome and brave son, Sahadeva, in the forest. How can your anger not increase? I have been born in the lineage of Drupada. I am the daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. On seeing me in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! It is certain that there is no anger left in you. Despite seeing your brothers and me, your mind is not miserable. But the sacred texts say that there is no kshatriya in the world without anger. But in you, today, I see that which is contrary to kshatriyas. O Partha! A kshatriya who does not

display his energy when the time is right is always despised by all beings. Therefore, under no circumstances should you show and forgiveness towards your enemies. There is no doubt that you are capable of destroying all of them through your energy. But it is also true that a kshatriya who is not pacified when the time of forgiving arrives, is not loved by all beings and is destroyed here, and in the hereafter."'

326(29)

'Droupadi said, "On this, an ancient story is recounted, the conversation between Prahlada and Bali, the son of Virochana. Prahlada was Bali's father's father and was the Indra of the daityas. That immensely wise Indra of the asuras was one to whom all knowledge of dharma had been imparted. 'O father![179] Does forgiveness lead to welfare, or is it better to seek revenge? I have a doubt about this. So please tell me exactly by answering my question. You are knowledgeable about dharma. So please tell me, without a doubt, which of the two is better. I will then do exactly as you have instructed me.' On being thus asked, the grandfather answered everything exactly. He was wise and answered everything exactly, so that the doubt in the question could be removed.

'"Prahlada said, 'O son![180] Revenge is not always superior. Nor is forgiveness always superior. Learn the nature of both, so that there is no scope for doubt. O son! A man who always forgives suffers from many faults. His servants treat him with contempt and others are also disrespectful. All the beings never bow down before him. Therefore, the learned say that perpetual forgiveness should be avoided. Disregarding him, the servants fall prey to many sins. Those with limited intelligence try to take his riches away from him. The servants also appropriate his vehicles, garments, ornaments, beds, seats, food, drink and all his other articles. They do not give to those to whom presents should be given, as instructed by the master to give, but fall prey to their own desires. The master is never shown the respect he deserves. To be ignored in this world is worse than death. O son! Slaves, sons, servants and even those who are not servants speak harsh words to such a forgiving person. They abuse the forgiving person and even desire his wife. The wife too follows her own desire and intelligence. Even if a slight bit of punishment is deserved and it is not meted out, those lovers of pleasure will injure him and resort to evil acts. These and other faults are always associated with those who are forgiving. O Virochana's son! Now listen to the faults associated with those who never forgive. If in the wrong place, or even in a right one, a person is afflicted with passion and anger and metes out various punishments on the strength of his energy, he will be clouded because of his energy and will face conflicts with his allies. He will receive hatred from the worlds and from his relatives. Because of the contempt displayed, such a man suffers loss of riches and receives abuse, disrespect and disregard. He confronts remorse, hatred and confusion and creates enemies. If in anger, a man inflicts different

kinds of punishments on men, he is swiftly deprived of his riches, life and relatives. If he equally uses his force on benefactors and those who wish him ill, such a man is shunned in the world, like a snake inside a house. How can the world confer good fortune on someone who is shunned? People are sure to hurt him, as soon as they find a weakness. Therefore, one should not always be overpowering. Nor should one always be gentle. He who is gentle at the right time and harsh at the right time always finds happiness in this world and the next. Listen, I will now tell you in detail about the time when one should be forgiving. This has been recounted by the learned ones earlier and should always be followed. If a former benefactor commits a crime that is not too great, in view of the earlier favour, this transgression should be pardoned. Those who commit an offence out of stupidity and seek pardon should be forgiven, because learning is not easily available everywhere to men. Even if the offence is slight, an offender who commits a crime with full knowledge, but claims he did not know, should be punished, because this is crookedness. The first offence should be forgiven for all beings. But when they commit the second one, however slight, it should be punished. If a crime is committed unknowingly, it is said that this should be pardoned, but only after proper examination. Gentleness can vanquish gentleness and gentleness can also vanquish harshness. There is nothing that gentleness cannot vanquish. Therefore, gentleness is the stronger of the two. But one should act after considering the time and the place, the strengths and the weaknesses. The wrong time and place can lead to failure. Therefore, one should wait for the right time and place. Sometimes, an offender can be pardoned out of regard for the people. These have been described as the right times to forgive. At times other than these, it has been said that one should use one's energy.'"[181]

'Droupadi said, "O lord of men! Therefore, I think that the time for displaying your energy has come. The avaricious sons of Dhritarashtra are always engaged in doing harm. This is not the time to exhibit forgiveness towards the Kurus. The time has come to show energy, and punishment must be displayed. The mild are always disregarded. But people are careful of those who are harsh. He who knows the right time to employ both of these is a true lord of the earth."'

327(30)

'Yudhishthira said, "Anger destroys men and anger again leads to prosperity. O immensely intelligent one! Know therefore that both well-being and ill-being find their source in anger. O beautiful one! He who always restrains his anger obtains prosperity. O beautiful one! But he who never controls his anger, never obtains prosperity. The terrible anger contributes to his downfall. It has been seen that anger is the root of destruction for all beings. How can someone like me indulge in anger, when it brings about the destruction of the worlds? The angry man commits sin. The angry man may even murder his superiors. The angry man abuses his superiors with harsh words. When

angered, one cannot distinguish between what should be said and what should not be said. There is nothing that such a person cannot do or say. From anger, one can kill someone who should not be killed, or honour someone who should be killed. An angry person can even send himself to Yama's abode. On realizing these faults, the learned ones have said that anger must be conquered, if one wishes for supreme welfare in this world and the hereafter. The wise have controlled anger. O Droupadi! Thinking about this, why should someone like me also not act accordingly? That is the reason my anger does not increase.

'"One who does not retaliate in anger against someone who is angered, saves himself and the other person from great fear. He is like a physician for both. A weak man may be oppressed by men who are stronger. But if he is angered in his folly, he brings about his own destruction. In the hereafter, there is no world for one who does not control one's own self and destroys one's own self. O Droupadi! It has therefore been said that those who are weak should control their anger. And though powerful, the wise one is not angered when oppressed. Having destroyed his oppressor, he finds delight in the next world. It is for this reason that wise men who have the knowledge, be they strong or weak, always forgive, even if they are in difficulties. O Krishna! The righteous always praise those who have controlled anger. The virtuous hold the view that victory comes to the forgiving and the good. Truth is superior to falsehood and gentleness to cruelty. For the sake of killing someone like Suyodhana,[182] how can someone like me show the anger, with its many faults, that is shunned by the virtuous? It is certain that learned and far-sighted ones call someone controlled when he has no anger in him. If a person uses wisdom to check an anger that has arisen, those who know the truth call such a person powerful. O one with the beautiful hips! An angry one cannot see the course of action accurately. An angry man does not see his tasks or his limits. The angry one kills those who should not be killed. He exhibits harshness towards his superiors. Therefore, it is the duty of anyone with power to keep anger at a distance. For one overcome with anger, it is not easily possible to attain courtesy, tolerance, valour, swiftness, energy and other qualities. By forsaking anger, a man can attain his true energy. O immensely wise one! But it is extremely difficult for an angry one to exhibit his energy when the time is right. Those who have no learning always think that anger is the same as energy. Passion has been given to humankind for the destruction of the world.

'"Therefore, a person who wishes to live appropriately must always forsake anger. It is certain that it is better to give up one's own dharma than fall prey to anger. It is all those who have no intelligence and limited senses who transgress this. O unblemished lady! How can someone like me do this? If men equal to the earth in forgiveness did not exist, there would be no peace among men, but dissension caused by anger. If injured ones return the injury and those oppressed by seniors return the oppression, the outcome will be a destruction of all beings and the establishment of that which is not

dharma. O Krishna! O one with the beautiful face! If every man who is abused immediately abuses back, if one who is injured returns violence with violence, if fathers oppress their sons and sons oppress their fathers, if husbands oppress their wives and wives oppress their husbands, there can be no birth in a world thus angered. Know that the birth of all beings is conditional on conciliation. O Droupadi! All beings will be swiftly destroyed in such a world. Thus anger leads to the destruction and non-existence of all beings. It is because people as forgiving as the earth are seen in this world that beings keep getting born and there is existence. O beautiful one! A man must be forgiving in all his difficulties. It has been said that the birth of all beings results from forgiveness. If a man is insulted and oppressed by a stronger person, but always pacifies his anger and controls his anger, he is said to be learned and supreme. Such a man has influence in the eternal worlds. But one who has little knowledge and falls prey to anger is destroyed in this world and the next.

'"O Krishna! The great-souled and forgiving Kashyapa sung this hymn in honour of those who are eternally forgiving: 'Forgiveness is dharma. Forgiveness is sacrifices. Forgiveness is the Vedas. Forgiveness is the sacred texts. He who knows this is capable of forgiving everything. Forgiveness is the brahman. Forgiveness is the truth. Forgiveness is the past and the future. Forgiveness is austerities. Forgiveness is purity. Forgiveness holds up the entire world. Forgiving ones attain the worlds of ascetic ones who know the brahman and those who know about sacrifices. Forgiveness is the energy of the energetic. Forgiveness is the brahman of the ascetics. Forgiveness is the truth of those who are truthful. Forgiveness is alms. Forgiveness is fame.' O Krishna! The brahman, truth, sacrifices and the world are established in forgiveness and how can someone like me give up something like that? Those who perform sacrifices enjoy their worlds and those who forgive enjoy other ones. A man who is wise must always forgive. Whoever forgives everything attains the brahman. This world belongs to those who forgive. The next belongs to those who forgive. They are honoured here and in the hereafter and attain the pure goal. Men who always overcome their wrath through forgiveness obtain the supreme worlds. Therefore, forgiveness is considered supreme.

'"In praise of those who are forgiving, Kashyapa always chanted these verses. O Droupadi! Now that you have heard these verses about forgiveness, do not be angered. Our grandfather,[183] Shantanu's son, always praises peace. The preceptor[184] and Kshatta Vidura also speak about peace. Kripa and Sanjaya also speak about peace. Somadatta, Yuyutsu, Drona's son[185] and our grandfather Vyasa always speak about peace. Always urged by all of them towards peace, I think the king[186] will return the kingdom. If he does not, he will face destruction. A terrible time has come about. It will lead to the destruction of the Bharatas. O beautiful one! I am certain that this has been decreed by destiny a long time ago, and thereafter. Suyodhana is undeserving of forgiveness and therefore he finds none. I deserve it and therefore, forgiveness has

taken possession of me. Forgiveness and gentleness are eternal dharma and the conduct of those who have control over their own selves. Therefore, that is the way I will act."'

328(31)

'Droupadi said, "I bow before Dhata and Vidhata,[187] who have confused you. You should follow the conduct of your father and grandfather. But your mind leads you in a different direction. A man never obtains prosperity in this world through dharma, gentleness, forgiveness, uprightness and tenderness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Else, this miserable calamity would not have befallen you. Neither you, nor your immensely energetic brothers, deserve this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, and even now, they know that nothing is as loved by you as dharma, which is more dear to you than even life. The brahmanas, the superiors and even the gods know that your kingdom is for dharma and your life is also for dharma. I think that you can give up Bhimasena, Arjuna, Madri's two sons and me, but you will never forsake dharma. I have heard from aryas[188] that a king protects dharma and dharma in turn protects him. But I think it does not protect you. O tiger among men! Like a man is followed by his own shadow, you have always steadily followed dharma. You have never disparaged your equals or your inferiors, not to speak of your superiors. Even after conquering the entire earth, your vanity did not increase. O Partha! You have always served the gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas through *svahas*,[189] *svadhas*[190] and other forms of worship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have always satisfied brahmanas, ascetics, those who desire salvation and householders with every object that they desire. You have given forest-dwellers iron[191] vessels. In your house, there is nothing to be seen that cannot be given to brahmanas. O king! Every morning and every evening, at the end of the *vaishvadeva* ritual,[192] you give to guests and servants and survive on what remains. Sacrifices to obtain wishes, sacrifices with animals, sacrifices to gratify desires, sacrifices connected with cooking and other sacrificial tasks are always performed. Even in this great and deserted forest, populated by bandits, your recourse to dharma has not diminished, even though you have been deprived of your kingdom. You have observed great sacrifices like the horse sacrifice, the rajasuya, the lotus sacrifice and the cow sacrifice and offered large quantities of dakshina.

'"O king! But after that, your intelligence was confounded and you were vanquished in an unequal game of dice. You lost your kingdom, riches, weapons, brothers and even me. You are upright, gentle, benevolent, humble and truthful. How could this attachment to dice degrade your intelligence? On witnessing your great unhappiness and your misfortune, my mind is agitated and extremely bewildered. I will recount an ancient tale to show how all the worlds are under the control of the supreme god.[193]

Even before the seed is released, the lord Ishana[194] determines in advance happiness and unhappiness and pleasure and displeasure for all beings. O brave man! O king! These subjects are like wooden puppets and he controls their bodies and limbs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covering all these beings like the sky, the supreme god decides on all that is good and all that is evil. A bird tied to a string is not its own master. Like that, they are under the control of the supreme god and are not their own master or anyone else's. Like a pearl on a string, like a bull with a rope through its nose, a man is under the control of the creator, is part of him and is given to him. Like a tree that has fallen from the bank into the middle of a river, he is at no time under his own control. Creatures are ignorant. Their happiness or unhappiness is not determined by themselves. They are sent by the supreme god to heaven or hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All beings are under the control of the creator, like the tips of straws are under the control of the strong wind. Yet again, the supreme god yokes himself to good deeds and evil ones. He pervades and roams in all beings, but is not noticed. This physical body is only the field. It is only the creator's instrument and the illustrious one uses it to perform deeds, good and evil. Look at the powers of maya the supreme god exhibits. He confounds them with illusion and makes beings kill other beings. The sages who know the truth visualize this in a different way and alter their course, like the wind in the sky. But men think of it in a different way and the lord creates and alters them in a different way. O Yudhishthira! Like wood is broken with wood, stone again with stone, iron with iron and that which is insensate with that which has senses, like that, the great grandfather, the self-created one, the illustrious god is not detected, and kills beings with other beings. The lord unites and disunites them, as he desires. The illustrious one plays with all beings, like a child with his toys. O king! The creator does not act towards beings like a father or a mother. Like an inferior person, he seems to be driven by rage.

'"My thoughts are agitated when I see that those who are good, righteous and modest suffer in their conduct, while evil ones are happy. O Partha! On witnessing your calamity and Suyodhana's prosperity, I blame the creator who tolerates such inequality. He confers prosperity on Dhritarashtra's cruel and avaricious son,[195] who lowers dharma and transgresses what the virtuous sacred texts say. What fruits does the creator obtain from this? If a performed deed follows its performer and no one else, then the supreme god has certainly been tainted by this evil deed. Or if the evil that is done does not taint the performer, then strength alone is the cause of everything and I grieve for those who are weak."'

329(32)

'Yudhishthira said, "O Yajnaseni! We have heard the words that you have spoken. They are sweet, well crafted and full of good expressions. But what you have said is atheism.

O princess! I do not follow dharma because of its fruits. I give what should be given. I sacrifice what should be sacrificed. O Krishna! Without bothering about whether there is fruit or not, and to the best of my abilities, I do what a man who is a householder is supposed to do. O one with the beautiful hips! I do not follow dharma because of the fruits of dharma, but because I do not want to transgress the traditional texts and wish to follow the conduct of the virtuous. O Krishna! My mind is naturally fixed on dharma. He who wishes to milk dharma does not obtain the fruits of dharma. Nor does the evil-minded atheist, who having performed a task, has doubts. Do not doubt dharma, driven by pride, or in an attempt to debate. A man who doubts dharma is destined to be born as inferior species. Like shudras have no access to the Vedas, weak-minded ones who are doubtful about dharma and the ways of the rishis are barred from the undecaying and immortal worlds. O famous one! If one studies the Vedas, follows dharma and is born in a noble lineage, then kings who follow dharma refer to him as old.[196] Vile ones who transgress the sacred texts and have doubts about dharma in their evil-mindedness, are worse than even shudras and thieves.

'"With your own eyes, you have seen the immensely ascetic rishi Markandeya. Rendered immortal by dharma, the one whose soul is immeasurable had come here. Vyasa, Vasishtha, Maitreya, Narada, Lomasha, Shuka and other rishis, whose minds are virtuous, have obtained success through dharma alone. You have yourself seen them, possessing the powers of divine yoga, capable of every curse and boon, and superior to the gods themselves. They have always told me that dharma alone is the task to be followed. They are like the immortals and clearly have knowledge of the traditional texts. O fortunate one! Therefore, out of the confusion of passion or because your mind is agitated, you should not doubt the creator or dharma, or censure them. He who doubts dharma finds nothing else against which he can measure himself. He considers himself as the measure and proudly debases the superior. He thinks like a child that the world connected with pleasuring the senses alone is real, and is deluded about everything else. There is no atonement for one who doubts dharma. Despite all his reflections, there are no worlds for such a mean and evil one. The ignorant one, who does not acknowledge what has been proved, criticizes the meaning given to the Vedas and the sacred texts and is addicted to desire and avarice, descends into hell. O fortunate one! But he who unquestioningly and with a steady mind follows the path of dharma, obtains eternity in the hereafter. O Krishna! He who transgresses the proof given by the rishis, does not follow dharma and transgresses all the sacred texts, that deluded one doesn't obtain bliss in a hundred births. O Krishna! Do not doubt the dharma followed by the righteous, which has been recounted by the ancient rishis who know everything and can see everything. O Droupadi! Like a boat to a merchant who wishes to cross to the other shore of an ocean, dharma is the only boat that takes one to heaven and there is nothing else. O unblemished one! If the dharma followed by those who observe dharma

had no fruit, then this entire universe would have been immersed in darkness and would not have been established. No one would have progressed towards salvation. Everyone would have lived the life of animals. There would only have been restraints and nothing would have been earned or gained. If austerities, brahmacharya, sacrifices, studying, generosity and honesty did not have their fruits, then the ancient ones and those who came before them, would not have observed these. If these deeds did not have fruits, there would have been extreme confusion.

'"Why do rishis, gods, gandharvas, asuras, rakshasas and all the other powerful lords follow dharma so assiduously? It is because they know that the creator will give the supreme fruits to those who follow dharma. O Krishna! This is eternal dharma. This dharma bears fruits. It has never been said that dharma has no fruits. It can be seen that learning and austerities also bear fruit. O Krishna! That is also the case with you. Remember the circumstances of your birth, as you have heard them. You also know how the powerful Dhrishtadyumna was born. O one with the sweet smiles! This is sufficient proof. Knowing that deeds have fruits, the wise one is content with only a little. But ignorant and stupid ones are not satisfied with even a lot. But after death, dharma gives them no happiness or deeds. O passionate one! The fruits of deeds, both good and evil, and their origins and ends are mysteries to even the gods. No one knows them. Beings are in darkness about them. They are protected by the gods and the maya of the gods is deep. Brahmanas who are lean of form, righteous in their vows and are austere, and having burnt down their sins are of a serene mind, they can see them. Not being able to see the fruit, one should not doubt dharma or the gods. Without distractions and envy, one should perform sacrifices and donations. Deeds have their fruits. That is the eternal dharma. This is what Brahma told his sons and it was known by rishi Kashyapa.[197] O Krishna! Therefore, let your doubt be destroyed like the mist.[198] Deciding that this is the way it is, give up your atheism. Do not speak ill of the supreme god who is the preserver of all beings. Learn about him. Worship him. Do not have the kind of thoughts you have had. O Krishna! It is through the grace of the supreme god that faithful mortals can tread the path of the immortals. Do not disregard him in any way."'

330(33)

'Droupadi said, "O Partha! I have not insulted or censured dharma in any way. Why should I censure the supreme god, the lord of all beings? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know me as one who is incoherent with grief. Listen to me with a calm mind, as I lament a lot more. O destroyer of enemies! Whatever is born must certainly perform tasks. Not even inferior ones, but only the immobile[199] can live without acting. O Yudhishthira! From the time one suckles at a breast to the time one is supine before death, all mobile beings act according to their nature. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Among mobile beings in particular, men wish to perform deeds that ensure

conduct in this life and the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All beings know about ascent.[200] The world is a witness to the fact that they directly reap the fruits of their actions. I can see myself that all beings live in accordance with this ascent, even the creator[201] and the preserver,[202] like a crane in the water. You should do your own task, without becoming fatigued. You should be armed through your deeds. He who knows his own task is one in a thousand, if not rarer. Therefore, one should act, to protect and to extend what one has. If it[203] is eaten up without a new crop, it dwindles like the Himalayas. All subjects would have been destroyed had they not performed their tasks. Do we ever see people act, without their acts leading to fruits? We do not know of anyone in this world who makes a living without action. In this world, those who believe in destiny and those who believe in chance are both wrong. What is praised is intelligence based on action. He who is happily asleep and believing in destiny, makes no effort, that evil-minded one soon sinks like a pot in the water. This is also true of the one who believes in chance and though capable of action, fails to act. His seat is not permanent and he lives like a weak one, without a protector. If a man unexpectedly obtains something and it is thought that it has been obtained by chance, his efforts have not been successful. O Partha! If a man obtains something and describes it as destiny, then he certainly decides that it was divine decree and nothing but fate. The fruit that a man obtains through his own acts is directly seen through the eyes and is regarded as manliness. One who is naturally active obtains results without any obvious reason. O supreme among men! Know that this fruit is only natural. Whatever is thus obtained by a man through chance, divine destiny and as the natural outcome of deeds is the fruit of the man's earlier deeds.

'"According to the deeds men have earlier done, the preserver and the supreme god distribute them and their fruits in their respective tasks. Whatever task a man performs, good or bad, know that this has been decided by the preserver in accordance with the fruits of the earlier deeds. This body is only an instrument of the preserver to undertake acts and take actions. Under his control, one helplessly acts accordingly. O Kounteya! It is the great lord who appoints us to this task or that one and all beings are made to act, though they are themselves inert. Having fixed the objective in one's mind, one subsequently undertakes the task. A man who himself uses his intelligence first is therefore the cause, because of his resolution. O bull among men! It is not possible to count the number of deeds. Man is the reason behind the success of houses and towns. There is oil in sesame seeds. There is milk in cows. Finally, there is fire in wood. Using one's intelligence, one should cleverly understand the means for attaining success. Thereafter one undertakes action, after ascertaining the reasons for success. It is on the success of their deeds that beings survive. An act that is well performed by a skilled actor is certainly different from another act that is felt to have been performed by one who is not skilled. Had man not been the reason behind the success of acts, there would

have been no oblations and sacrifices, no disciples or preceptors. It is because a man is himself the actor that he is praised for the success of his deeds and blamed in the case of failure. How can one's deeds be destroyed?

'"Some say that everything is the outcome of chance, others that everything is the outcome of destiny. There are those who think it results from a man's efforts. Others say the reason is threefold. Others hold that it is not enough to think of the task alone. Everything is invisible, be it chance or destiny. It is seen that results are the outcome of chance or destiny. Some of it is chance, some of it is destiny, some of it is the outcome of one's own deeds. This is how a man obtains the fruits, there is no fourth reason. Learned and skilled ones who know say this. But even then, the preserver is the one who gives desirable and undesirable fruits to all beings. Had that not been the case, no beings would have been miserable. A man would have performed the act that would bring him his desired results. Had earlier acts not existed, his deeds would have led to success. Those men who do not see these three doors to success and failure are unsuccessful, like their own worlds. Tasks must always be performed. This is what Manu had decided. A man who does not act is always defeated. O Yudhishthira! If a man acts, he is usually successful. Those who are lazy rarely attain success. If there is a reason for failure, propitiation is indicated. O Indra among kings! But if the act is undertaken, one is freed from one's debts. Misfortune characterizes the lazy man who sleeps. But a skilled one certainly obtains the fruits and attains prosperity. Intelligent men committed to acting never have doubts and are successful. But they do not seek to free from doubt those who doubt and are unsuccessful.

'"We have now been overtaken by misfortune. However, if you engage in action, there is no doubt that this misfortune will be removed. Even if you are unsuccessful, you will have the pride and this is also true of Vrikodara, Bibhatsu and the twin brothers. The tasks of others have obtained success and ours might also be. Without undertaking the task first, how can one know what the outcome will be? Having cleaved the earth with his plough and sown the seed, the farmer waits silently for the rains to be the cause. However, if the rains do not favour him, the farmer is not to be blamed. He knows he has done everything that any other man could have. Even if we do not obtain the fruits of success, the slightest bit of blame will not attach to us. The intelligent one keeps this in mind and does not blame himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if the objective is not attained, though one has acted, there is no reason to despair, because there are two other reasons too.[204] There is success and there is failure. But lack of inclination is a different thing altogether. Success in a task is the united outcome of many factors. If the required attributes are deficient, the fruit may be incomplete, or non-existent. O one without decay! But if the task is not begun, neither fruit nor attributes can be seen. According to his strength and power, the intelligent one brings together time, place, means and auspicious rites for prosperity. Those who are not

deluded must act. Valour will be the instructor. Among the qualities required for action, valour is the most important. If an intelligent person sees one[205] who is superior in many qualities, he should employ conciliation and other kinds of tasks. O Yudhishthira! He should wish for his misery and destruction. This is true of oceans and mountains, not to speak of mortal men. By looking for the weaknesses in an enemy, a man satisfies a debt to himself, as well as to the enemy. A man should never think ill of himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prosperity does not come to one who thinks of himself as having become overpowered. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the foundation for the success of the world. It is said that the reasons for success are many and depend on the time and the place.

'"In earlier times, a learned brahmana was lodged in my father's house.[206] O bull among the Bharata lineage! He told all this, first propounded by Brihaspati,[207] to my father. He also taught all this to my brothers. I overheard this conversation at home. O King Yudhishthira! He explained this to me comfortingly, when I would arrive on some task, or when I was serving, or when I was seated on my father's lap."'

331(34)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Yajnaseni, the intolerant Bhimasena went to the king.[208] He sighed angrily and told him, "For the sake of kingship, tread along the road of dharma, one used by righteous ones. Deprived of dharma, artha and kama, what do you gain by living in this hermitage of ascetics? Duryodhana did not rob the kingdom through dharma, honesty or energy, but through deceitful gambling with dice. Our kingdom was stolen the way a weak scavenging jackal steals a piece of meat from stronger lions. O king! Why have you abandoned artha, which is the source of dharma and kama, tormenting yourself in this wilderness in some trifling pursuit of dharma? Protected by the wielder of the Gandiva,[209] our kingdom could not even have been robbed by Shakra. But because of our obedience to you, it was stolen in front of our eyes. While we were still alive, our riches were taken away from us because of you, like bilva fruit or cattle from those who are crippled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are always firm in desiring dharma. But it is because we sought to do what is pleasing to you, that we now face this great calamity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It was because our selves were under your control that we are now ploughing our friends and providing delight to our enemies. It was our stupidity that we did not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra. But because we followed your commands, that evil deed is now tormenting us. O king! Look at you, living in a home meant for animals. This is the act of a coward, not one served by the strong. This is not approved by Krishna,[210] or Bibhatsu, or Abhimanyu, or Srinjaya,[211] or I myself, or the two sons of Madri. Because you are dharma, you always oppress yourself by your vow towards dharma. O king! But

isn't it possible that despair has condemned you to the life of an impotent? It is only cowards who are incapable of winning back their prosperity. They love despair, which bears no fruits and destroys everything. You have strength and sight. You can see your manliness. O king! But because you have resorted to gentleness, you do not feel our distress.

'"While we have always been forgiving, the sons of Dhritarashtra regard us as incapable. This causes more grief than death in battle. If all of us were to die in battle, in a straight fight and without turning back, that would have been better, because we would have obtained worlds after death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! And if we killed them all and obtained back the entire earth, that would also be superior. If we are always devoted to our tasks and established in our own dharma, if we wish to obtain great fame, if we wish to repulse enmity, then the signs are that for our own sake, we should embark on war. Our kingdom has been stolen by others. We will be praised and not censured. O king! Dharma that causes affliction to our friends and our own selves is vice. It is not dharma. It is bad dharma. A man who always resorts to dharma follows weak dharma. Dharma and artha desert him, like happiness and unhappiness leave a man who is dead. One who suffers dharma's afflictions for the sake of dharma alone is not learned. He does not know the true purpose of dharma, like a blind one does not know the rays of the sun. He who thinks that artha exists only for the sake of artha, does not know about artha. He is like a servant tending to cattle in the forest. He who excessively pursues artha and doesn't pay attention to the other two goals[212] deserves to be censured, like the killer of a brahmana, and should be killed by all beings. In that way, he who always pursues kama and ignores the other two goals of dharma and artha, is certain to be robbed of his friends and will be weak in dharma and artha. He is certain to be killed at the end of the kama, like a fish that roams with pleasure until the pond dries up. It is for this reason that the learned are never confused about dharma and artha. They are required for kama, like kindling for a fire. Dharma is the root of all artha and dharma is united with artha. Know that the two are rooted in each other, like the ocean and the clouds. One feels a sensation of pleasure when one touches objects that have artha. This kama is a state of the mind and has no physical existence. O king! A man who pursues artha should also strive for great dharma. He who strives for kama also seeks artha, because from kama one obtains nothing else. Kama yields no fruit other than desire, once that fruit is used up. The learned regard it as ashes from wood. O king! Just as a seller of meat kills small birds, in that way, it is the nature of that which is not dharma to kill beings. One who does not perceive the nature of dharma because of desire and avarice deserves to be killed by all beings. He remains evil-minded, here and in the hereafter. O king! It is known to you that artha is derived from the possession of objects. You also know about its nature and its various transformations. Its loss, or destruction at the time of old age and death, is regarded as a calamity. That affliction

has now overtaken us. The five senses, the mind and the heart find pleasure when there is attachment to objects. In my view, that is the supreme fruit of one's deeds. Thus, dharma, artha and kama should be considered separately. A man should not be excessively addicted to dharma, or to artha, or to kama. All of them must always be served. The sacred texts decree that dharma must be followed in the first, artha in the middle and kama in the last.[213] The sacred texts decree that, in due order and according to age, kama must be observed in the first, artha in the second and dharma in the last.[214] O supreme among eloquent ones! Learned ones who know the nature of time apportion their time in due order, serving all of dharma, artha and kama. O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage![215] Whether freedom from these or obtaining them is the superior goal for those who seek to obtain happiness is a question that you should reflect on, with every means at your disposal. O king! You should then swiftly act on obtaining either the former or the latter. He who lives a life of vacillation between the two is immersed in a miserable state.

'"You know dharma and you have always practised it. On knowing this, your well-wishers are urging you to act. O king! Donations, sacrifices, honesty, worship, retention of the Vedas and uprightness—these represent powerful and supreme dharma, here and in the hereafter. O king! But one who is distressed and destitute cannot serve these. O tiger among men! This holds even if one has all the qualities. O king! The universe is based on dharma and there is nothing that is above dharma. O king! But dharma can only be served through great wealth. O king! Such wealth can never be obtained through begging or through impotence, but can always be obtained by one whose intelligence is based on dharma. O bull among men! Begging brings success to brahmanas. But that has been forbidden to you. Therefore, seek to obtain the artha that you desire by exercising your energy. Begging is not recommended, nor the life of a vaishya or a shudra. In the heart of kshatriyas, the special dharma is that of strength. The wise and the learned say that nobility is dharma. Therefore, strive for nobility and do not stop short of it. O Indra among kings! You know the eternal dharma. Awake! You have been born to perform cruel deeds,[216] those that other men suffer from. The fruits that you obtain by nurturing your subjects can never be condemned. O king! This is the eternal dharma that the preserver[217] has determined for you. O Partha! If you deviate from this, you will provide cause for laughter to the world. Men do not praise deviation from one's own dharma. O Kounteya! Make your mind that of a kshatriya. Forsake this lassitude of mind. Rely on valour. Bear the weight like a beast of burden. O king! No one has won the world with only dharma in his soul. No king has won prosperity and fortune in this way. One can obtain a kingdom by deceiving inferior ones, who have avarice in their hearts, with a sweet tongue, like one with a spear[218] obtains food. O bull among the Pandavas! The asuras were the elder brothers and were

prosperous in every way.[219] But the gods conquered them through deceit. O lord of the earth! O mighty-armed one! Knowing that everything belongs to those with strength, win over the enemies by resorting to deceit. There is no archer who is equal to Arjuna in battle. There is no man who is my equal in wielding the club. O king! A strong one engages in battle on the basis of strength, not on the basis of greater numbers or greater enterprise. O Pandava! Therefore, resort to your prowess. Prowess is the source of artha. Nothing else is the source. It is not useless, like the shade of a tree during the winter. O Kounteya! If one desires greater artha, one should give up some artha, like seeds sown on the ground. There is no doubt about this. But when the gain of artha is equal to the expenditure made of artha, or smaller than it, expenditure is not the indicated task. That would be like scratching an ass. O Indra among men! In that way, a man who gives up a little bit of dharma for the sake of obtaining greater dharma is certainly considered to be wise. If an enemy possesses friends, learned ones make them their friends. Then, when the enemy is weakened because his friends have left him, they overcome him. O king! Those who are strong embark on a battle on the basis of prowess, not only enterprise or sweet words. That is how all the subjects are made one's own. By uniting together, weak ones can kill a stronger enemy, like bees kill someone trying to steal the honey.

'"O king! The sun sustains and destroys all beings with its rays. Be like the sun. O king! Just as it was observed by our grandfathers, we have heard the ancient accounts about the observance of austerities, so as to protect the earth in accordance with ordinances. On witnessing your affliction, the world has decided that the sun may lose its light and the moon its beauty. O king! Separately and collectively, when assemblies gather together in conversation, they praise you and censure the other.[220] O king! Over and above this, when brahmanas and the Kurus assemble, they happily talk about your adherence to the truth. They say you have never uttered a falsehood because of delusion, meanness, greed, fear, desire or wish for prosperity. If a king acquires demerits in an attempt to win the earth, all of that can later be countered through sacrifices and offering of large quantities of dakshina. O king! Just as the moon emerges from darkness, he is freed from all his sins by giving villages and thousands of cows to brahmanas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![221] O Yudhishthira! All the citizens and residents of the countryside, both young and old, often praise you. The kingdom vested in Duryodhana is like a dog's skin touched by milk, the brahman in a shudra, truth in a robber and strength in a woman. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are the words that have been uttered in the world since ancient times. Even women and children say it, as if it was part of studying.

'"Therefore, mount the chariot that is stocked with all the implements. Let the best of brahmanas pronounce benedictions over you, so that your supreme objective is

successful. Set out instantly, and today itself, for Gajasahrya.[222] Surrounded by your brothers, who are skilled in the use of weapons and wield firm bows, and whose valour is like that of venomous serpents, you will be like the killer of Vritra[223] surrounded by the Maruts. Use your energy to destroy the weak enemies, like the destroyer of the asuras. O Kounteya! O immensely strong one! Rob the sons of Dhritarashtra of their prosperity. No man on earth can withstand the touch of arrows when they are unleashed from Gandiva. Shafted in feathers of vultures, they are like virulent serpents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When I am enraged in battle, no warrior, no elephant and no noble steed can withstand the force of my club. O Kounteya! With the help of the Srinjayas,[224] the Kekayas and the bulls among the Vrishnis, how can we not win back our kingdom in battle?"'

332(35)

'Yudhishthira said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no doubt that all this is true. Your sharp words pierce me like barbs and weaken me. But I cannot blame you. My wrong course of action has brought this adversity and misery on us. I took up the dice with a desire to take away the sovereignty and kingdom of Dhritarashtra's son. It was thus that Subala's son, the skilful and deceitful gambler, played with me for Suyodhana's sake. O Bhimasena! Shakuni, the dweller of the mountains,[225] is knowledgeable in great maya. He hurled out the dice in the middle of the sabha. He used maya against me, who did not know any maya. It is then that I saw the deceit. I saw that the dice would always follow the wishes of Shakuni and favour him in odds and evens.[226] I was capable of restraining my mind then, but anger robs a man of his patience. O son![227] The self cannot be controlled when it is overcome by manliness, pride and valour. O Bhimasena! I do not take umbrage at what you have said. I think that this was destined to be. O Bhimasena! The king who is Dhritarashtra's son wished to rob us of our kingdom and inflict misery on us. Slavery was inflicted on us and it was Droupadi who became our only refuge.

'"Both you and Dhananjaya know what Dhritarashtra's son told us when we were summoned to the sabha yet again to gamble with dice. In front of all the Bharatas, he told us what one throw of the dice would entail. He said, 'O prince! O Ajatashatru! Without being concealed, you will have to live in the forest of your choice for twelve years. After that, you and your brothers will have to live for another year in concealment and without being detected. O father![228] O Partha! But when you are roaming thus, if the spies of the Bharatas hear of you or detect you, you will again have to spend a similar period in that fashion. Knowing this, you must give your certain promise. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you are not found out during that period and manage to confound my spies, I promise in this assembly of Kurus that

you will have the five rivers back.[229] If we are defeated by you, 'all my brothers and I' will give up our comforts for a similar period and live accordingly.' This is what the king said earlier in the midst of the Kurus and I gave my promise. That abominable game of dice then began there. All of us were defeated and exiled. We are thus roaming around in these regions, in these difficult forests that are in the form of a calamity. Even then, Suyodhana did not wish for peace. He fell prey to even greater rage. He encouraged all the Kurus and all those who were under his control.[230] Having entered into an agreement before righteous ones, who would wish to break it for the sake of a kingdom? As an arya, I think that transgression of dharma is worse than death, even for the sake of ruling the earth.

'"You could have performed a brave deed then. You grasped your club at the time of the gamble. Had Phalguna not restrained you, you would have burnt my arms. O Bhima! That would not have been a misdeed then. Since you are aware of your manliness, why did you not speak up then and perform the deed at its appointed time. You have found the time now, when it is too late. When the time has passed, what is the point of censuring me? O Bhimasena! But I suffered from misery even more, when I saw Yajnaseni oppressed and though we saw it, we restrained ourselves. O Bhima! That was like drinking a poisonous juice. O brave one among the Bharata lineage! We cannot do anything now. We made an agreement in the midst of the Kuru warriors. We must wait for the time, until our happiness dawns again, like those who sow seeds wait for the fruit. If someone has been vanquished through deceit earlier and knows that the enmity will bear flowers and fruit, such a brave one truly lives in the world of the living and obtains many qualities through his manliness. He obtains all the prosperity in this world. I think that his enemies bow down before him. His friends gather around and worship him, and live off him, like the gods off Indra. Know that the promise I made will be true. I think dharma is superior to immortality and life. The kingdom, sons, fame, wealth—all of these are worth only a small fragment[231] of truth."'

333(36)

'Bhimasena said, "O great king! You have made an agreement with time, the arrow[232] that brings an end to everything. It has no end, it is without measure and it is like a current that carries everything away. I think that it follows the dharma of foam and the dharma of fruit. You are a mortal and you are tied down by time. How can you think that time is directly before you? O Kounteya! Like collyrium becomes less every time it is picked with a blade of grass,[233] one's life becomes less in an instant. Why should it[234] wait? Only one whose life has no end or one who knows the measure of one's life can wait for time, since one can then see everything clearly. O king! If we wait for time and for thirteen years, our lives will be shortened and we will be nearer death. The

bodies of those who have bodies are always overtaken by death. Therefore, we should work towards obtaining the kingdom before death. One who should extend the earth,[235] but does not avenge enmity, fails to achieve fame and remains incomplete, like a useless cow. If a man does not avenge enmity because he has little strength and enterprise, I think that his birth has been useless and that he has been born in an inferior lineage. O lord of the earth! Your arms will be laden with gold, you will attain fame. Use the strength of your arms to kill those who hate you in battle and enjoy the riches. O king! O destroyer of enemies! If a man goes to hell after killing a deceitful person, that instantly becomes like heaven to him.

'"The torment born from anger burns more than fire. I am tormented by it and cannot sleep during the day or at night. Partha Bibhatsu is foremost among those who draw the string of the bow. He is now supremely tormented like a lion in its den. Like a giant elephant, he is suppressing the great heat that arises inside him, though unaided, he can take on all the archers in the world. So as to please you, Nakula, Sahadeva and the aged mother[236] who has given birth to warriors are seated, benumbed and dumb. All our relatives, together with the Srinjayas, wish you well. But I and Prativindhya's mother[237] are greatly tormented and speak to you, though what I am saying will be agreeable to them too. All of them have attained great grief and all of them will welcome war. O king! No calamity can be greater than this. Mean and weaker ones have stolen our kingdom and are now enjoying it. O scorcher of enemies! You are bearing this misery so that your conduct is not tainted out of tenderness and gentleness. But no one will praise you for this. Your gentleness is like that of a brahmana. How have you been born as a kshatriya? Those who are born in that womb are usually cruel-minded. You have heard about the dharma of kings, as recounted by Manu. They are cruel, characterized by deceit and are against pacification. O tiger among men! There is work to be done. Why are you behaving like a crippled one? You have intelligence, valour, knowledge and birth.

'"O Kounteya! You wish to conceal us, like hiding the Himalaya Mountains in a handful of grass. You are famous throughout the earth. You will not be able to live secretly, undetected. O Partha! The sun cannot pass undetected in the sky. How can Jishnu remain unrecognized? He is like a giant shala tree, like a palasha tree with branches and flowers. He is like a white elephant. O Partha! How will these two young brothers who are like lions, Nakula and Sahadeva, remain hidden? The princess Droupadi is the mother of brave ones and the performer of sacred deeds. O Partha! Krishna is famous. How will she remain unrecognized? O king! All the subjects know me, even the children. I see myself as unrecognized as Mount Meru. Besides, we have exiled many kings and the sons of kings from their kingdoms and they will now follow Dhritarashtra. Deprived and exiled by us, they will not have pacific feelings towards us. They will certainly try to injure us, so as to cause him pleasure. They will employ many

spies against us. There will be a great danger that they will detect us and inform against us. We have already lived in this forest for thirteen months. Regard that as equal to that number of years. The learned ones have said that a month can substitute for a year, like *putika*[238] is a substitute for soma. Act accordingly. O king! You can also free yourself from this single sin[239] by satisfying with sacred food a bull that pulls a sacred burden. O king! Therefore, make up your mind to kill your enemies. For kshatriyas, there is no dharma other than that of fighting."'

334(37)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Bhimasena's words, Kunti's son Yudhishthira, a tiger among men and the scorcher of enemies, sighed and reflected. Having reflected for an instant and having decided what he should do, he immediately replied to Bhimasena, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O mighty-armed one! It is as you say. O one who is wise with words! But also listen to the words that I have to say. O Bhimasena! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Great sins that are begun only out of courage bring pain. O mighty-armed one! But an act that is well advised, well powered, well executed and well planned is successful in its objective and is divinely auspicious. Out of your own strength and insolence and out of rashness, you have thought about a deed that needs to be done. But listen to what I have to say about that. Bhurishrava, Shalya, the valorous Jarasandha, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Drona's valorous son[240] and Dhritarashtra's invincible sons with Duryodhana at the forefront—all of them have their weapons ready and are prepared to murder. The kings and the lords of the earth whom we suppressed have resorted to the Kourava side and are affectionate towards them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They now seek to do good to Duryodhana, not to us. Their treasury is full and they have a large army. They will make an effort to protect these. All the Kourava armies, with their sons, advisers and soldiers, have been given riches and honours everywhere. The warriors have been specially honoured by Duryodhana. It is my certain view that they will give up their lives for him in battle. Though the conduct of Bhishma, the mighty-armed Drona and the great-souled Kripa is equal,[241] they will certainly be driven by the royal morsels.[242] That is what I think. All of them are knowledgeable in the use of divine weapons and all of them are devoted to dharma. Therefore, no matter how precious, they will give up their lives in battle. My view is that they cannot be vanquished, even by the gods and Vasava. Then there is maharatha Karna, intolerant and always angry. He is skilled in the knowledge of all weapons and cannot be assailed, because he is covered with impenetrable armour. O Vrikodara! Without first defeating in battle all these foremost of men and without any allies, you cannot kill Duryodhana. I cannot go to sleep when I think of the lightness of hand of the suta's son.[243] He is foremost among all those who handle the bow."

Bhimasena was intolerant. But having heard these words, he became pensive and alarmed at the truth of these words and did not reply anything.

'When the two Pandavas were thus conversing, Satyavati's son, the great yogi Vyasa arrived. When he arrived, he was duly worshipped by the Pandavas and the supreme among eloquent ones then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, "O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! O bull among men! I have swiftly come here, because with my insight I got to know what was passing through your heart. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O killer of enemies! I will dispel the fear that exists in your heart about Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Drona's son. I will tell you how they can be legitimately killed according to the rules. On hearing this, regain your composure and do what needs to be done." Then Parashara's son[244] spoke to Yudhishthira alone and that eloquent of speakers told him words of grave import. "O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The time for you to regain your fortune will come. Partha Dhananjaya will overcome the enemies in battle. Accept from me this knowledge known as *pratismriti*, as I recount it to you. It is success personified. On receiving it from you, the mighty-armed Arjuna will be successful. O Pandava! For the sake of weapons, he must go to the great Indra, Rudra, Varuna, the lord of riches[245] and Dharmaraja.[246] Because of his austerities and valour, he has the power to see the gods. He is an immensely energetic rishi. He is the ancient, eternal and everlasting god who is Narayana's companion and a part of Vishnu.[247] When he has obtained weapons from Indra, Rudra and the Lokapalas,[248] the mighty-armed one will perform great deeds. O Kounteya! O lord of the earth! Think about leaving this forest and going to another forest that is more appropriate for your residence. It is never very pleasant to live in the same place for a long time. This can cause anxiety to the serene ascetics. Since you support many brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and the vedangas, the deer will be exhausted and the plants and herbs will decay." Having thus spoken, the illustrious lord, Satyavati's intelligent son Vyasa who was learned in yoga, taught Dharmaraja, who had purified himself, that supreme knowledge of yoga. He then took Kounteya's leave and instantly disappeared.

'Yudhishthira, the intelligent one with dharma in his soul, carefully nurtured that knowledge of the brahman in his mind, repeating it from time to time. He was happy with Vyasa's words. Leaving the forest of Dvaitavana, he went to the forest of Kamyaka, on the banks of the Sarasvati. O great king! Just as the rishis follow Indra of the gods, the brahmana ascetics, learned in words and sounds, followed him. On arriving in Kamyaka, the great-souled bulls among the Bharatas began to live there, with their advisers and followers. O king! Those intelligent ones lived there for some time. The warriors engaged themselves in the science of archery and listened to the supreme Vedas. They went out on hunts every day, seeking to kill deer with pure arrows.[249] In

accordance with the rites, they offered oblations to the ancestors, the gods and the brahmanas.'

335(38)

Vaishampayana said, 'After some time, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira remembered the sage's words. He spoke privately to Arjuna, bull among the Bharata lineage and whose wisdom was known. He smiled at him and gently took him by the hand. After thinking for an instant about their abode in the forest, Dharmaraja, the destroyer of enemies, secretly spoke to Dhananjaya. O king! The intelligent one thought about it there and said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The four parts of *dhanurveda*[250] are today established in Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Drona's son.[251] They know all types of brahma, divine and asura weapons, how to release them and how to counter them. They know the use of all weapons and how to counter them. All of them have been pacified by Dhirtarashtra's son. He has gratified them with gifts and treats them like preceptors. He always exhibits the best of conduct towards all the warriors. Thus revered by him, they will not fail to show their power when the time comes. Today, the entire earth is under Duryodhana's suzerainty. You are our last refuge and a great burden is vested in you. O destroyer of enemies! I see that the time has come for you to perform a task. O son![252] I obtained secret knowledge from Krishna Dvaipayana. If you use it, the entire universe will become visible to you. O son! Having attentively received this brahman, when the time is right, you must seek the favour of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Devote yourself to terrible austerities. Armed with a bow, armour and sword, be like a revered sage. O son! Without allowing anyone to pass you, traverse a path towards the northern direction. O Dhananjaya! Indra possesses all the divine weapons. Out of their fear from Vritra, the gods gave all their powers to Indra. They are all accumulated in one place. Go to Shakra and he will give all the weapons to you. Be consecrated and set out immediately for the god Purandara."[253] Having uttered these words, the lord Dharmaraja imparted the knowledge to him, after he was consecrated according to the rites and controlled in speech, body and mind. The elder brother then gave the warrior brother the permission to leave.

'On Dharmaraja's instructions that he should meet the god Purandara, he grasped the bow Gandiva and the great inexhaustible quivers. He clad himself in armour, leather gloves, leather arm-guards and finger-guards. The mighty-armed one offered oblations into the fire and having received gold coins, the brahmanas pronounced their blessings. Having grasped his bow and arrows, sighing and casting a glance upwards, the mighty-armed one then left, for the sake of the destruction of Dhritarashtra's sons. On seeing Kounteya grasp his bow and arrows, the brahmanas, the siddhas and the invisible beings said, "O Kounteya! May you swiftly obtain the desire in your heart." Arjuna's gait was

like that of a lion and his thighs were like the trunks of shala trees. The hearts of everyone went with him and Krishna[254] told him, "O mighty-armed Dhananjaya! O Kounteya! All that Kunti wished for you at the time of your birth and all that you desire for yourself must come true. Let none of us ever be born in the lineage of kshatriyas again. I always salute the brahmanas, who never have to make a living out of war. All your brothers will spend their waking hours in repeatedly praising and recounting your valorous deeds. O Partha! But if your sojourn proves to be a long one, we will find no satisfaction in our minds in our comforts, riches and even in our lives. O Partha! All our happiness and unhappiness is now established in you, our life and death, our kingdom and our prosperity. O Kounteya! I take leave of you. O Pandava! May all be well with you. I bow down before Dhata and Vidhata. May all be well along your path and may you be healthy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! May you be safe from all beings in the sky, the earth and heaven and may all other beings not create obstructions in your path." The mighty-armed Pandava then circumambulated his brothers and Dhoumya, and grasping his beautiful bow, departed.

'All the beings left the path the lustrous and valorous one traversed, resorting to yoga so as to be united with Indra. The great-souled one reached the sacred mountain in just one day. Having resorted to yoga,[255] he was as fast as thought and like the wind. Having crossed the Himalayas and Gandhamadana and traversing unwearied over inaccessible terrain during night and day, Dhananjaya reached Indrakila[256] and stopped there. He heard a voice from the sky asking him to stop. Then Savyasachi saw an ascetic seated under a tree. He was thin and yellow and his hair was matted. He blazed with the radiance of the brahman.

'On seeing that he had stopped, the great ascetic spoke to Arjuna, "O son! Who are you? You have come here, clad in armour and with bow and arrows. You have girded on a sword and have leather gloves. You are following the dharma of kshatriyas. But there is no use for weapons here. This is a peaceful region populated by ascetic brahmanas who have controlled anger and delight. The bow has no use here, nor is there any fighting. Therefore, throw down your bow. You have reached your supreme objective." Thus the brahmana repeatedly spoke to Arjuna, the brave one of infinite energy, as if he was an ordinary man. But so firm was he that he could not dislodge him from his resolution. Then the brahmana was extremely pleased and smilingly told him, "O fortunate one! O destroyer of enemies! I am Shakra. Choose a boon." Having been thus addressed by the one with the thousand eyes,[257] Dhananjaya, the brave extender of the Kuru lineage, joined his hands in salutation and bowed and replied, "O illustrious one! This is the object of my desire. Please grant it to me as a boon. I wish to obtain from you today the knowledge of all weapons." The great Indra was extremely pleased and smilingly replied, "O Dhananjaya! You have attained this place. What use will weapons

be to you? Ask for desires and worlds. You have attained the supreme objective.” Having been thus addressed, Dhananjaya replied to the one with a thousand eyes, “I do not wish for worlds, desires or divinity, not to speak of happiness. O lord of the thirty gods! I do not wish for lordship over the gods. If I forsake my brothers in the wilderness and do not avenge the enmity, I will attain infamy in all the worlds for an eternity.” Having been thus addressed, the slayer of Vritra, worshipped in all the worlds, told Pandu’s son in consoling words, “O son! When you have seen the lord of all beings, the three-eyed Shiva who wields the trident, I will then give you all the divine weapons. O Kounteya! Act so that you are able to see the supreme god. When you have seen him, you will be successful and will go to heaven.” Having thus spoken to Phalguna, Shakra disappeared. Resorting to yoga, Arjuna remained there.’

336(39)

Janamejaya said, ‘O illustrious one! I wish to hear in detail how Partha, the one whose deeds are unsullied, obtained the weapons. What did the long-armed Dhananjaya, tiger among men, do? O one who knows about the brahman! What did he do while he lived there? How did he satisfy the illustrious Sthanu, lord of the gods? O supreme among brahmanas! Through your grace, I wish to hear all this. You are omniscient. You know everything, divine and human. O immensely wise one! The ancient battle between Arjuna, supreme among warriors and unvanquished in battle, and Bhava[258] was unparalleled and extraordinary and made one’s hair stand up. On hearing about it, the hearts of the brave Parthas,[259] lions among men, also trembled in despondency, delight and great surprise. Tell me everything about Partha’s[260] deeds. I do not see the slightest thing to censure in Jishnu. Recount to me everything about the character of that brave one.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O son! O tiger among the Kouravas! I will recount for you the divine, great and extraordinary story of that great-souled one. O unblemished one! Hear in detail the account of Partha’s meeting with Tryambaka,[261] god of the gods, where there was physical contact. On Yudhishthira’s instructions, the infinitely valorous one set out to see Shakra, lord of the gods, and Shankara,[262] god of the gods. To ensure that his task met with success, the immensely strong and mighty-armed Arjuna, bull among men, took his divine bow and sword.’

‘O king! With a steadfast mind, Kouravya, Indra’s son,[263] maharatha in all the worlds, set out in a northward direction for the peak of the Himalayas. His mind was fixed on austerities. He swiftly entered a terrible forest that was full of thorns. It was full of many flowers and fruit and was populated by many birds. It was full of many types of animals and was frequented by siddhas and charanas. When Kounteya entered the forest that was bereft of men, the sounds of conch shells and drums could be heard

from heaven. A great shower of flowers fell down on the ground. A net of clouds covered everything with shade. Passing through the forest that was difficult of access, he approached the great mountain. In all his splendour, Arjuna then lived on the peak of the Himalayas. He saw many flowering trees there, resounding with the sweet sounds of birds. There were rivers with many currents, tinged like blue lapis lazuli,[264] echoing with the sounds of swans and ducks, the cries of cranes and resounding with the notes of male cuckoos, herons and peacocks. On seeing the beautiful woods and the pure, cool and clear water, the great warrior Arjuna was delighted. The great-souled Arjuna then engaged in terrible austerities in a beautiful region of that beautiful forest. He clad himself in darbha grass, bark and deerskin and carried a staff. In the first month, he ate fruits once every period of three nights was over. In the second month, it was for double the period.[265] In the third month, he ate once every fortnight, surviving on decayed leaves that fell down on the ground. When the fourth moon arrived and the moon was full, the mighty-armed son[266] of Pandu survived only on air. He raised his arms up, and without anything for support, stood on the tips of his toes. Because of the frequent baths he took, the matted hair of that great-souled one whose energy was infinite, became as lustrous as lightning and the lotus.

'Then all the maharshis went to Pinaki.[267] They prostrated themselves before the immensely illustrious one with the dark throat[268] and sought his favours. They told him about Phalguna's deeds, "This immensely energetic Partha has established himself on the peak of the Himalayas. He is engaged in difficult and terrible austerities and smoke is emerging in all the directions. O lord of the gods! None of us knows what he wishes for. He is tormenting us. It would be better if he were to be restrained." Maheshvara replied, "In a happy frame of mind and without fatigue, swiftly return to wherever you have come from. I know the resolution that is fixed in his mind. He does not wish for heaven, or riches, or a long life. I will accomplish today everything that he wishes for." Having heard Sharva's[269] words, all the truthful rishis returned to their hermitages in happy frames of mind.'

337(40)

Vaishampayana said, 'When all those great-souled ascetics had departed, the illustrious lord Hara,[270] the destroyer of all sins and the one with the pinaka in his hand, assumed the form of a kirata, blazing like a *kanchana* tree[271] and resplendent in form, like Meru among the mountains. He grasped his handsome bow and many arrows that were like venomous serpents. He descended with great force, like a flame, like a fire consuming the undergrowth. The illustrious one was accompanied by the goddess Uma,[272] attired in the same way and observing the same vow. All the beings, in their different forms,

were then greatly delighted. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In his form of a hunter, and accompanied by thousands of women, he blazed forth. In an instant, that entire forest became silent. The sounds of streams and birds stopped.

'As he approached Partha of the unblemished deeds, he saw the extraordinary sight of Muka, a son of Diti.[273] He had assumed the form of a boar and the supremely evil one wished to kill Arjuna. Phalguna picked up his Gandiva bow and arrows that were like venomous serpents. He strung his supreme bow and as the twang of the bowstring resounded, he said, "I have come here, without causing you any injury. But since you nevertheless desire to kill me, I will first send you to Yama's abode today." On seeing the firm-bowed Phalguna about to shoot, Shankara in the form of the hunter suddenly restrained him, "I was the one who sought this one with the colour of a blue cloud[274] first." However, disregarding these words, Phalguna struck. At that very instant, the hunter also unleashed his immensely radiant arrow at the same target, like the crest of a fire or like lightning. The arrows shot by those two simultaneously struck Muka's gigantic body, which was as solid as a mountain. The two arrows struck him like the force of lightning and the roar of thunder descended on a mountain. He was pierced by more arrows that were like serpents with flames in their mouths. Assuming the terrible form of a rakshasa, he then gave up his life.

'On seeing the man with the golden complexion, dressed in the garb of a hunter and accompanied by women, Kounteya Jishnu, the destroyer of enemies, was delighted and smilingly told him, "O one with the golden complexion! Who are you, wandering in this deserted forest and accompanied by women? This animal had been chosen by me. Why did you pierce it? When the rakshasa had arrived here, I was the one who had picked him first. Whether you did this from desire or with the intention of insulting me, you will not escape with your life. What you have done towards me today is not in accordance with the rules of hunting. O one whose refuge is the mountains! Therefore, I will kill you today." At Pandava's words, the hunter laughed at him and told Pandava Savyasachi in soft words, "He became my target first. I was the one who chose him first. It was my shot that robbed him of his life. Insolent about your own strength, do not blame others for your own faults. O evil-minded one! You have insulted me. You will not escape with your life. Stay there. I will shoot arrows like thunder at you. Do the best you can and unleash your arrows at me." Thereupon, both of them repeatedly shouted at each other. They shot arrows that were like venomous serpents at each other. Arjuna covered the hunter with a shower of arrows. But in a happy frame of mind, Shankara received them all. For an instant, the wielder of the pinaka received that shower of arrows, but stood there like an immobile mountain, unhurt in body. On seeing that his shower of arrows had no effect, Dhananjaya was extremely surprised and exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent! Aha! This one with the delicate body makes a home on the peak of the Himalayas. But he receives the iron arrows[275] unleashed from the Gandiva and is

not moved. Who is he? Is he a god? Is he Rudra himself? Is he a yaksha or the lord of the gods? The thirty gods often frequent this best of mountains. Except the god Pinaki, there is no one who can withstand the force of the net of thousands of arrows I have created. As long as it is anyone other than Rudra who stands here, be it a god or a yaksha, I will send him to Yama's abode with my sharp arrows." O king! Like the sun spreads out its rays, Jishnu then shot iron arrows by the hundreds, capable of piercing one's weak spots. But the illustrious god, the one who brings fortune to the worlds and holds the trident in his hand, cheerfully received them, like a mountain withstands a shower of rocks. In a short while, all of Phalguna's arrows were exhausted.

'On seeing that all his arrows were exhausted, he began to tremble. Jishnu thought of the illustrious fire-god, who had earlier given him two inexhaustible quivers in Khandava. "What will I unleash from my bow now? My arrows have been exhausted. Who is this man who swallows up all my arrows? I will kill him with the curved end of my bow, like a terrible spear is used on elephants. Yama wields the staff and I will send him to his abode." Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, then grasped him with the curved end of his bow. But the mountain-dweller snatched away his divine bow. Bereft of his bow, Arjuna stood there, with a sword in his hand. Wishing to end the fight, he dashed at him with great force. With all the valour in his arms, the courageous descendant of the Kuru lineage[276] struck at his head with the sharp sword, one that even mountains could not resist. However, on striking his head, it shattered into pieces. Then Phalguna began to fight with trees and rocks. But the gigantic and illustrious god who was in the form of a hunter withstood the trees and the rocks. Smoke billowed from the immensely strong Partha's mouth. He struck that invincible one, who was in the form of a hunter, with fists that had the force of the vajra. However, the illustrious one who was in the form of a hunter struck Phalguna with terrible fists that were like Shakra's thunder. As a result of this fight with fists between Pandava and the hunter, the terrible sound of slapping arose there. That great and hair-raising battle with the fists went on for some time, like that ancient battle between Vritra and Vasava. The powerful Jishnu grasped the kirata and pressed his chest and the kirata struck Pandava with great force. As a result of the pressure of their arms and the pressing of their chests, a fire with smoke and embers emerged from their bodies. Then Mahadeva grasped his[277] body firmly and attacked him with energy and force, so that he was deluded of his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus oppressed by the god of the gods, Phalguna's body was bruised and became like a ball of flesh. He lost control over his body. Oppressed by the great-souled one, his breathing stopped. He fell down unconscious and Bhava was pleased.

'The illustrious god said, "O Phalguna! I am pleased with you because of your matchless deeds. There is no kshatriya who is equal to you in valour and endurance. O unblemished one! Your energy and valour has been equal to mine today. O mighty-

armed one! O bull among men! I am pleased with you. Behold me. O large-eyed one! I will give you eyes.[278] You have been a rishi earlier. You will triumph over all your enemies in battle, even if they happen to be dwellers of heaven." At that, Phalguna saw that immensely radiant god, the god Mahadeva Girisha,[279] who wields the trident, and the goddess.[280] He knelt down on the ground and bowed down his head in homage. Partha, the conqueror of the cities of enemies, gratified Hara.[281] Arjuna said, "O Kapardin![282] O lord of all the beings! O destroyer of Bhaga's eyes![283] O illustrious god! O Shankara! Pardon my transgression. O illustrious one! It was in a desire to see you that I came to this great mountain, beloved by you, lord of the gods, and the supreme abode of the ascetics. O illustrious god, worshipped by all the beings! Be pleased. O Mahadeva! Pardon my crime and my extreme bravery. Out of ignorance and insolence, I fought with you. O Shankara! I seek refuge with you. Pardon me." Then the immensely energetic Vrishabhadhvaja[284] smiled, and grasping Phalguna's beautiful hands, said, "I have pardoned you."'

338(41)

'The illustrious god said, "You were Nara in an earlier body, the companion of Narayana. You spent many *ayuta*[285] years in fearful austerities in Badari.[286] There is supreme energy in you, like that in Vishnu, supreme among men. The universe is held up through the energy of the two of you, foremost among men. O lord! At the time of Shakra's consecration, you and Krishna oppressed the danavas and you took up the great bow that thunders like clouds. O Partha! This Gandiva is fit for your hands. O supreme among men! It was that which I snatched from you, using my powers of maya. O Partha! These two quivers will again be inexhaustible, as they used to be for you. O Partha! I am pleased with you. Truth is your valour. O bull among men! Accept a boon from me. What is it that you desire? You are the one who shows respect. There is no one on earth who is your equal. Nor is there anyone in heaven. O conqueror of enemies! The kshatriyas find their chief in you."

'Arjuna replied, "O illustrious god! O Vrishadhvaja![287] O lord! If you wish to grant me that which I desire, I wish for the terrible and divine weapon known as *pashupata*.[288] It is known as *brahmashira*. It is fearful and is terrible in prowess. When the terrible end of a yuga approaches, it destroys the entire world. Through this weapon, I can burn down in battle danavas, rakshasas, spirits,[289] pishachas, gandharvas and pannagas.[290] When unleashed with mantras, it releases thousands of spears, fearful clubs and arrows that have virulent poison in them. With it, I will fight in battle Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the son of the suta,[291] who always speaks very

harshly. O illustrious god! O destroyer of Bhaga's eyes! This is my first wish. Through your grace, let me be empowered in my pursuit."

'The illustrious god said, "O Pandava! I will give you the great pashupata weapon, dear to me. You will be capable of bearing, releasing and withdrawing it. The great Indra, Yama, the king of the yakshas,[292] Varuna and Vayu do not know it. How can it be known to humans? O Partha! But it must not be suddenly released at any man. If it is released at someone who lacks in energy, it will destroy the entire universe. There is no one in the three worlds, mobile or immobile, who cannot be killed by it. It can be released through thought, eyes, words or the bow."'[293]

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing this, Partha swiftly purified and composed himself. He went to the lord of the universe, who said, "Learn." Then he taught the best of the Pandavas the mysteries of this weapon, including its withdrawal. It was like the embodied form of death. From then on, it waited on the great-souled one,[294] as it did on Tryaksha,[295] the husband of Uma. Arjuna accepted it with a delighted heart. At that, the entire earth, with its mountains, forests, trees, oceans, regions of groves, villages, cities and towns, began to tremble. When the moment came, the sounds of thousands of conch shells, drums and kettledrums were heard. A great whirlwind[296] occurred. The gods and the demons saw the embodied form of the blazing and terrible weapon by the side of the immensely energetic Pandava. Tryambaka[297] touched the immensely energetic Phalguna and everything that was impure in his body, was immediately destroyed. Then Tryambaka gave Arjuna permission to leave and go to heaven. Lowering his head in obeisance, Partha joined his hands in salutation and looked at the god. Then, the lord of the residents of heaven, the immensely wise Girisha, Shiva the husband of Uma, gave that supreme of men the great bow known as Gandiva, the destroyer of demons and pishachas. In front of the eyes of that supreme of men,[298] the great god then rose up into the sky, accompanied by Uma, leaving that supreme of mountains, with its white peaks, sides and caverns and frequented by birds and maharshis.'

339(42)

Vaishampayana said, 'Like a setting sun before the eyes of the worlds, Pinaki Vrishabhadhvaja disappeared before his eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arjuna, the slayer of enemy warriors, was extremely astounded. He said, "I have seen the great Mahadeva in person. I am blessed and greatly favoured. For I have seen Tryambaka Hara Pinaki, the granter of boons, in person and have touched him with my hands. I know that I have accomplished my objective. I have already defeated my enemies in battle. All my objectives have been attained." Then, lighting up all the

directions, the handsome lord of the waters[299] arrived. His complexion was like that of lapis lazuli[300] and he was surrounded by aquatic creatures, nagas, male and female rivers, daityas, sadhyas[301] and gods.[302] Varuna, the self-controlled lord of all aquatic creatures, arrived in that region. Followed by yakshas, the lord Kubera also arrived. His complexion was like that of gold and he arrived in a splendid chariot. The illustrious lord of riches, extraordinary in form, came to see Arjuna, illuminating the sky. In similar fashion, the illustrious Yama, the powerful destroyer of the worlds and the one who makes the worlds prosper, also came in person. He was accompanied by the ancestors, embodied and disembodied. The destroyer of all beings, whose soul cannot be fathomed, came with a staff in his hand.[303] Dharmaraja, the son of Vivasvat,[304] arrived in a chariot that brightened up the three worlds, with guhyakas, gandharvas and pannagas. He was like a second sun when the end of the yuga has arrived. From that resplendent and multi-hued peak of that great mountain, they saw Arjuna there, engaged in austerities. In a short while, the illustrious god Shakra arrived. He was accompanied by Indrani[305] and was surrounded by masses of gods. He was seated on Airavata's[306] head. The white umbrella that was held aloft his head shone like the lord of the stars[307] amidst white clouds. He was praised by gandharvas, rishis and those blessed with the power of austerities and having reached the peak of the mountain, he stood there like a rising sun.

'Yama, supremely knowledgeable in dharma, was established in the southern direction. That intelligent one then spoke these pure words, in a voice like the roar of clouds. "O Arjuna! Behold. All the protectors of the worlds have assembled here. We will give you sight, because you deserve to see us. In the past, you were an immensely strong rishi named Nara. O son! Instructed by Brahma, you have been born on earth. You have been born from Vasava, who is immensely valorous and powerful. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![308] You will pacify kshatriyas who are like fire to the touch and are protected by Bharadvaja,[309] immensely valorous danavas who have been born as men and the *nivatakavachas*.[310] The greatly valorous Karna is a part of my father, the sun-god, who heats all the worlds.[311] O Dhananjaya! He will be slain by you. You will kill in battle those parts of the gods, danavas and rakshasas that have been born on earth. O Kounteya! O dragger of enemies! They will then obtain their ends, as determined by the fruits of their own deeds. O Phalguna! Your fame will remain eternal in the world. You have pleased Mahadeva himself in a great battle. Along with Vishnu,[312] you will lighten the burden of the earth. O mighty-armed one! Accept the staff,[313] my weapon that cannot be repulsed. With this weapon, you will accomplish great deeds." Partha, the descendant of the Kuru lineage,[314] accepted it in accordance with the prescribed

rites, with the mantras for holding, releasing and withdrawing.

'Varuna, the lord of aquatic creatures, was established in a western direction. His complexion was as dark as that of a cloud. The lord then uttered these words, "O Partha! You are foremost among the kshatriyas and you are established in the dharma of kshatriyas. Behold me with your large and copper-red eyes. I am Varuna, lord of the waters. When discharged by me, Varuna's noose[315] cannot be resisted. O Kounteya! I am giving it to you. Accept it, together with the mysteries and means of withdrawal. O brave one! At the time of the tarakamaya battle,[316] I used it to restrain thousands of great-souled daityas. O great-souled one! Accept it as a sign of my favour. Even Death will not be able to escape, if you assault him with this. When you are armed with this weapon and roam in the field of battle, there is no doubt that the earth will be bereft of all kshatriyas." After Varuna and Yama had given their divine weapons, the lord of riches, who lives on the peak of Kailasa, spoke.

'He said, "O mighty-armed one! O Savyasachi! Earlier, you were an eternal god. In an earlier era, your endeavours were always at our side. Accept this favourite weapon of mine, known as *antardhana*.[317] It is energetic, vigorous and resplendent. O destroyer of enemies! It can put the enemy to sleep."[318] Then the mighty-armed Arjuna, descendant of the Kuru lineage,[319] accepted Kubera's divine weapon in accordance with the rites.

'The king of the gods now spoke to Partha, the performer of unsullied deeds. He pacified him in gentle words, in a voice that was like a cloud or a kettledrum, "O mighty-armed one! O one with Kunti as your mother! You are the ancient Ishana.[320] You have already obtained supreme salvation earlier and have personally gone the way of the gods. O conqueror of enemies! You must now accomplish a great task for the sake of the gods. You will now ascend to heaven. O immensely radiant one! Prepare yourself. My chariot will descend to earth for you, driven by Matali.[321] O Kourava! I will give you divine weapons there." Having seen the lords of the worlds assembled on the peak of that mountain, intelligent Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, was astounded. Then the immensely energetic Arjuna paid homage to the assembled lords of the worlds in accordance with the rites, with words, water and fruit. The gods honoured Dhananjaya in return. All of them then returned as they had come, capable of going wherever they wished, with the speed of thought. Having obtained the weapons, Arjuna, bull among men, was delighted. He considered that his wishes had been satisfied and that his desires had been completely satisfied.'

Section Thirty-Two

Indralokabhigamana Parva

This section has 1175 shlokas and thirty-seven chapters.

Chapter 340(43): 38 shlokas
Chapter 341(44): 32 shlokas
Chapter 342(45): 38 shlokas
Chapter 343(46): 41 shlokas
Chapter 344(47): 12 shlokas
Chapter 345(48): 41 shlokas
Chapter 346(49): 43 shlokas
Chapter 347(50): 31 shlokas
Chapter 348(51): 29 shlokas
Chapter 349(52): 24 shlokas
Chapter 350(53): 21 shlokas
Chapter 351(54): 38 shlokas
Chapter 352(55): 13 shlokas
Chapter 353(56): 18 shlokas
Chapter 354(57): 23 shlokas
Chapter 355(58): 34 shlokas
Chapter 356(59): 25 shlokas
Chapter 357(60): 38 shlokas
Chapter 358(61): 125 shlokas
Chapter 359(62): 43 shlokas
Chapter 360(63): 24 shlokas
Chapter 361(64): 19 shlokas
Chapter 362(65): 37 shlokas
Chapter 363(66): 26 shlokas
Chapter 364(67): 22 shlokas
Chapter 365(68): 24 shlokas
Chapter 366(69): 34 shlokas
Chapter 367(70): 39 shlokas
Chapter 368(71): 34 shlokas
Chapter 369(72): 30 shlokas
Chapter 370(73): 28 shlokas
Chapter 371(74): 24 shlokas
Chapter 372(75): 27 shlokas
Chapter 373(76): 19 shlokas
Chapter 374(77): 29 shlokas
Chapter 375(78): 23 shlokas
Chapter 376(79): 29 shlokas

Indraloka *means Indra's world and* abhigamana *means to go or visit. So this section is about the visit to Indra's world, meaning Arjuna's visit to Indra's world.*

340(43)

Vaishampayana said, 'O Indra among kings! After the lords of the worlds had left,

Partha, the destroyer of enemies, thought about the chariot of the king of the gods. As the intelligent Gudakesha was thinking, the immensely resplendent chariot, driven by Matali, arrived. It removed the darkness from the sky and split the clouds. It filled the directions with a roar like that of giant clouds. It was stocked with swords, terrible spears, fearful-looking clubs, lances with divine power, giant flashes of lightning, vajras, *hudaguda*s with wheels,[1] implements that created gusts of wind and sounded like peacocks and large clouds, and fearful nagas that were giant in form and tall as white clouds and hard as rocks. The divine chariot, beautiful to the eye and full of maya, was drawn by ten thousand tawny horses that had the speed of the wind. He[2] saw there the immensely radiant and extremely blue flag known as Vaijayanta, as dark as a blue lotus[3] and with a staff that was ornamented with gold. He saw the charioteer seated on the chariot, adorned in molten gold. On seeing him, the mighty-armed Partha took him to be a god.

'While Phalguna was thus debating, Matali approached and bowing low, addressed Arjuna in these words, "O Shakra's son![4] The illustrious Shakra desires to see you. Swiftly ascend this chariot that has been sent by Indra. Your father Shatakratu, foremost among the gods, has told me, 'The thirty gods must see Kunti's son here in their abode.' Surrounded by the gods and masses of rishis and gandharvas and apsaras, Shakra himself is anxiously waiting to see you. On the instructions of the chastiser of Paka, ascend with me from this world to the world of the gods. Once you have obtained the weapons, you will return." Arjuna replied, "O Matali! Let us go swiftly. Ascend this supreme chariot that is difficult to obtain, even through a hundred rajasuya and ashvamedha sacrifices. Even immensely fortunate kings, who have performed sacrifices and given a lot of dakshina, or *daivatas*[5] or danavas, cannot ascend this supreme chariot. He who has not performed austerities cannot see this great and divine chariot, or touch it. How can one ride it? O virtuous one! Once you have established yourself in the chariot and the horses have been steadied, I will ascend it thereafter, like a performer of good deeds along the righteous path." Having heard these words, Matali, Shakra's charioteer, swiftly ascended the chariot and controlled the horses with the reins. After that, Arjuna purified himself by bathing in the Ganga. Then Kounteya, descendant of the Kuru lineage,[6] happily recited his prayers, in accordance with the rites. In accordance with the rites, he offered oblations to the ancestors. Then he bid farewell to Mandara, king of the mountains. "O mountain! You are always the refuge of righteous ones, those whose conduct follows dharma, the sages whose deeds are holy and those who desire to traverse the road to heaven. O mountain! Through your favours, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas attain heaven and devoid of afflictions, roam with the gods. O king of the mountains! O great mountain! You are the refuge of sages and have places of pilgrimage. I have lived happily on you. But I must now leave, bidding

you farewell. My eyes have seen many of your peaks, groves, rivers, springs and sacred places of pilgrimage." With these words, Arjuna, the destroyer of enemy warriors, bid farewell to the mountain. He then ascended the divine chariot, blazing like the sun. It resembled the sun in its form. It was divine and the performer of extraordinary deeds. In a delighted frame of mind, the intelligent descendant of the Kuru lineage[7] ascended upwards.

'His path became invisible to mortal ones who roam on earth. He saw thousands of chariots that were extraordinary in form.[8] There was no sun there, nor the moon, nor light, nor the fire. Everything shone there with the radiance of purity. Those are the brilliant regions that are seen in the forms of stars.[9] Though they are very large, because of the distance, they appear like lamps. Pandava saw them, full of radiance and beauty, resplendent in their own fires and established in their own abodes. There were rajarshis, siddhas, warriors slain on the field of battle, those who had obtained heaven through their austerities and had gathered in groups of hundreds, thousands of gandharvas with an energy like that of the radiant sun, guhyakas, rishis and masses of apsaras. On beholding those regions, with their own luminosity, Phalguna was astounded.

'In a friendly tone, he asked Matali and Matali replied, "O Partha! These are the performers of good deeds. They are established in their own abodes. O lord! From the earth, you have seen them in the form of stars." Then he saw, standing at the gate, the white elephant that is always victorious. This was the four-tusked Airavata, like Mount Kailasa. Travelling along the road traversed by the siddhas, the supreme one of the Kuru and Pandava lineages, shone, like the supreme king Mandhata in earlier times.[10] The lotus-eyed one passed through worlds earmarked for kings and then set his eyes on Amaravati, Shakra's city.'

341(44)

Vaishampayana said, 'He saw the beautiful city, frequented by siddhas and charanas. It was full of sacred trees that flower in every season. A fragrant breeze, mixed with the perfumes of sacred trees, intermingled with the sacred-scented breeze and fanned him. He saw the divine grove of Nandana,[11] frequented by masses of apsaras, and the celestial blossoming trees there welcomed him. This world of sacred deeds cannot be seen by those who have not burnt themselves with austerities, or those who do not maintain fires,[12] or those who have refrained from battle, or those who do not perform sacrifices and follow falsehood, or those who have abandoned the sacred learning of the Vedas, or those who have not bathed in the sacred waters of tirthas, or those who have been outside[13] donating gifts at sacrifices. The evil-minded ones who disrupt sacrifices,

are mean, are addicted to drinking, violate their preceptor's bed,[14] or eat meat, can never see it. Having seen the divine grove, resounding with celestial songs, the mighty-armed one entered Shakra's beloved city. He saw thousands of divine vimanas that were capable of going anywhere at will. They were stationed and he saw tens of thousands[15] of them moving around. Pandava was praised by gandharvas and apsaras and he was fanned by sacred winds, redolent with the scent of flowers. The gods, gandharvas, siddhas and supreme rishis happily welcomed Partha, whose deeds were untiring. He was blessed and praised, accompanied by the sound of divine instruments. The mighty-armed one advanced along the starry path famous as *suravithi*,[16] accompanied by the sound of conch-shells and drums. On Indra's command, Partha travelled along it and was praised in every direction. The Sadhya, Vishvas,[17] Maruts, Ashvins, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, unblemished brahmarshis, many rajarshis, the kings led by Dilipa,[18] Tumburu,[19] Narada and the gandharvas Haha and Huhu[20] were there. The descendant of the Kuru lineage[21] showed homage to all of them in the appropriate manner.

'Then the mighty-armed Partha descended from the supreme chariot and saw in person his father Shatakratu, the god Indra, the destroyer of enemies and the chastiser of Paka, the king of the gods. A beautiful white umbrella with a golden staff was held above his head. A divinely-scented fan was whisked. He was praised by Vishvavasu and the other gandharvas and foremost brahmanas chanted from the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. Approaching near, the mighty Kounteya lowered his head and Shakra also embraced him with his round arms. He grasped him by the hand and made him sit on Shakra's sacred throne, worshipped by the gods and the devarshis. When he was bowed in obeisance, Indra of the gods, the slayer of enemy warriors, smelt his forehead and made him sit on his lap. At the command of the god with the thousand eyes,[22] Partha, whose soul was immeasurable, sat on Shakra's throne and appeared like a second Vasava.[23] Vritra's enemy[24] affectionately touched Arjuna's handsome face with his sacred and fragrant hands and pacified him. He gently caressed his long arms, hardened by the string of the bow and as handsome as golden columns. The destroyer of Bala[25] repeatedly caressed his arms with hands that were marked from holding the vajra. The one with a thousand eyes kept looking at Gudakesha with a smile. The eyes of Vritra's destroyer dilated with delight and were not satisfied. Seated on the same seat, they made the assembly hall shine, like the sun and the moon rising in the sky on *chaturdashi*.[26]

'Headed by Tumburu, gandharvas, skilled in songs and chants, sang and chanted there and engaged in supreme dancing. Ghritachi, Menaka, Rambha, Purvachitti, Svayamprabha, Urvashi, Mishrakeshi, Dundu, Gouri, Varuthini, Gopali, Sahajanya, Kumbhayoni, Prajagara, Chitrasena, Chitralekha, Saha, Madhurasvara—these and other

beautiful lotus-eyed ones danced there. They were engaged in captivating the minds of the siddhas. The sides of their hips were wide and their breasts bounced. They stole the mind and the intelligence with their side-long glances, gestures[27] and sweetness.'

342(45)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then knowing Shakra's mind, the gods and the gandharvas welcomed Partha with a supreme arghya. They offered the king's son[28] *padya*[29] and *achamaniya*[30] and guided him to the entrance to Purandara's abode. Having been shown such homage, Jishnu lived in his father's house. Pandava learned about all the great weapons and the means of withdrawing them. From Shakra's hands, he received his beloved vajra weapon, impossible to withstand. This made a great roar and was like lightning, marked by the signs of clouds and peacocks.[31] On receiving the weapon, Pandava Kounteya thought of his brothers. But on Purandara's instructions, he lived there happily for five years. When Partha became skilled in the use of all weapons and the right time had come, Shakra told him, "O Kounteya! Now learn singing and dancing from Chitrasena. Learn the music that is only known to the gods and is unknown in the world of men. O Kounteya! If you learn this, it will bring your own welfare." Purandara then gave him to Chitrasena as a friend. Partha lived happily with him, free from all disease.[32]

'One day, while travelling around, maharshi Lomasha went to Shakra's abode, with a desire to see Purandara. The great sage met and bowed in obeisance before the king of the gods. He saw Pandava seated on half of Vasava's throne. Having obtained Shakra's permission, the best of brahmanas, worshipped by all the maharshis, sat down on an excellent seat.[33] On seeing Partha seated on Indra's throne, the thought occurred to him.[34] How could a kshatriya like Partha attain Shakra's seat? What were his good deeds? What worlds had he won? How had he obtained a place worshipped by the gods? Shakra, the slayer of Vritra, divined his thoughts.

'Shachi's consort smilingly told Lomasha, "O brahmarshi! Hear about the thought that is passing through your mind. Though he has been born as a kshatriya, this one is not a mere mortal. O Maharshi! This mighty-armed one is my son, born from Kunti. He has come here for a specific reason, to obtain weapons. You have not recognized him as that ancient and supreme rishi. O brahmana! Listen to me. I will tell you who he is and his purpose. Know that those two supreme and ancient rishis, Nara and Narayana, are none other than Dhananjaya and Hrishikesha. O brahmana! The sacred and famous hermitage named Badari,[35] which cannot be seen even by the gods and the great-souled rishis, was the place where Vishnu and Jishnu dwelt. Served by the siddhas and the charanas, that is the place from where the Ganga arises. O brahmarshi! On my instructions, these two

immensely radiant ones have been born on earth. These two immensely valorous ones will remove the earth's burden. There are the asuras known as the Nivatakavachas. Deluded by the boon they have obtained, they are engaged in causing us injury. Insolent because of their strength, they are now talking about killing the gods. Having been granted the boon, they do not show regard for the gods. Those terrible and immensely strong sons of Danu live in the nether regions. All the armies of the gods together are incapable of fighting with them. O supreme among brahmanas! Vishnu, the illustrious slayer of Madhu, the unvanquished god Hari, whose illustrious divine part lived on earth as Kapila and with an instant glance destroyed the great-souled sons of Sagara[36] who were digging towards *rasatala*, is alone capable of this great task that has to be accomplished for our sake. There is no doubt that he, together with Partha, will undertake this great battle. This one[37] is equal to all of them. Having killed them in battle, the warrior will again return to the world of men. On my instructions, you should yourself return to earth. You will see the brave Yudhishthira dwelling in Kamyaka. He has dharma in his soul and is always devoted to truth. Convey my words and message to him. He should not be anxious on account of Phalguna. 'He will soon return, after accomplishing the task of obtaining weapons. Without the sacred valour of his arms and without having obtained the weapons, he will not be able to withstand Bhishma, Drona and the others in battle. The mighty-armed and great-souled Gudakesha has obtained the weapons. He has become skilled in divine dancing, music and singing. O lord of men! O destroyer of enemies! You yourself, with all your brothers, should see all the venerated places of pilgrimage. O Indra among kings! Having bathed at these sacred places of pilgrimage, you will be cleansed of sin and overcome your fever.[38] Bereft of sin, you will enjoy the kingdom.'[39] O best of brahmanas! O foremost among brahmanas! You have the power of austerities. You should protect him as he travels the earth. Terrible rakshasas always live in the passes of mountains and in uneven regions. Always protect him from them." Lomasha, great in austerities, promised accordingly. He then left for earth, towards Kamyaka forest. He met there Kounteya Dharmaraja, the destroyer of enemies, surrounded everywhere by ascetics and his brothers.'

343(46)

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! What did the immensely energetic Dhritarashtra say when he heard of the extraordinary deeds of the infinitely energetic Partha?'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard from Dvaipayana, best of rishis, that Partha had gone to Shakra's world, the king who was Ambika's son[40] spoke these words to Sanjaya, "O charioteer! O suta! By any chance, do you know of the deeds of the intelligent Partha? Tell me everything in detail. My son is mad and follows the dharma of the vulgar.[41] He is evil in his soul and fixed on sin. That one of wicked intelligence

will destroy the earth. The words of the great-souled one[42] are always true, even in jest. He has Dhananjaya as his warrior and will win the three worlds. When Arjuna shoots his barbed iron arrows, pointed at the tips and sharpened on stone, is there anyone who has conquered death and old age so as to withstand him? All my evil-souled sons are under the sway of death. A fight with the invincible Pandava confronts them. I think about this all the time. Yet I do not see a charioteer who can withstand Gandivadhanva in battle, even if Drona or Karna advance against him in battle, or Bhishma himself. There is no doubt a great calamity confronts the world. But I do not see our victory. Karna is contemptible[43] and negligent. The preceptor is old and also his teacher.[44] Partha is wrathful, driven by vengeance and powerful, steady in valour. Since all these are incapable of being vanquished, a terrible battle will occur. All these warriors are skilled in the use of weapons and all of them will attain great fame. None of them will wish for the lordship of everything if that were to be obtained through defeat. Therefore, there will be certain peace only when they have been killed, or when Phalguna is. But no one exists who can kill Arjuna, or even vanquish him. How will his wrath towards the evil ones be pacified? That warrior is the equal of the thirty gods and gratified Agni in Khandava. He conquered all the lords of the earth at the great rajasuya sacrifice. O Sanjaya! O son![45] When a bolt of thunder strikes the peak of a mountain, it leaves some remnants. But the arrows shot by Kiriti leave no remnant. Like the arrows of the sun scorch everything that is mobile and immobile, the arrows shot by Partha's arms will scorch my sons. It seems as if the armies of the Bharatas have already been scattered, frightened at the roar of Savyasachi's chariot. Kiriti stands like an assassin in battle, unleashing showers of arrows. The creator has created him like the destroyer of everything. But that which is bound to happen cannot be avoided."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! What you have said about Duryodhana is exactly as you have stated it. O lord of the earth! Nothing that you have said is untrue. On seeking the famous Krishna, their wife according to dharma, brought into the assembly hall, the infinitely energetic Pandavas have been filled with wrath. O great king! On hearing Duhshasana's words that have terrible consequences, and those of Karna, I think that they have not been able to sleep. O great king! I have heard how Partha has used his bow in battle to satisfy Sthanu, who has eleven forms.[46] Kapardin, the illustrious lord of all the gods, himself fought with Phalguna in the disguise of a hunter, so as to test him. It was then that the lords of the world showed themselves to Arjuna, the valorous bull among the Kouravas, who performed austerities for the sake of weapons. There is no other man on earth, except Phalguna, who can dare to see those gods in their direct forms. O king! What man can wear out in battle a warrior whom Maheshvara could not wear out in the form that he had assumed? Having oppressed Droupadi and angered the Pandavas, they have brought this terrible and hair-raising calamity on themselves. On

seeing Duryodhana display his thighs to Droupadi, Bhima's lips trembled and he spoke these mighty words, 'O evil one! O one who cheats with dice! After thirteen years have elapsed, I will smash your thighs with my club, which is like the vajra.' All of them are supreme among warriors. All of them have infinite energy. All of them are skilled in every weapon. All of them are invincible, even to the gods. The Parthas are full of valour and vengeance. Because of their wrath, I think that they will kill your sons in battle."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O suta! What has Karna achieved by uttering those harsh words? It was extreme enmity that brought Krishna to the assembly hall thus. How can my sons be other than evil-minded when their eldest brother and superior[47] is not established in propriety? O suta! On seeing that I lack eyes, that bringer of misfortune thinks I lack enterprise and intelligence, and does not pay heed to my words. And those evil advisers, Karna, Soubala and the others, are bereft of intelligence and extend his many vices. Even if the infinitely energetic Partha shoots arrows playfully, they will scorch my sons, not to speak of when they are shot in wrath. Unleashed from the great bow with the strength of Partha's arms and energized with celestial mantras, they can strike down even the gods. What can one who has Hari Janardana, the protector of the three worlds, as his adviser, protector and well-wisher, not conquer? O Sanjaya! This is a great wonder that has been heard, that Arjuna clasped Mahadeva with his arms. All the worlds witnessed what had been done in Khandava earlier. With Damodara,[48] Phalguna aided the fire. When Partha, Bhima, Vasudeva and the Satvatas[49] are angered, nothing will be left of my sons, with their advisers and their relatives."'

344(47)

Janamejaya said, 'O sage! After having sent the brave Pandavas into exile, all these lamentations of King Dhritarashtra served no purpose. Why did the king agree with his son Duryodhana, whose intelligence is limited, and anger Pandu's sons, the maharathas? What did Pandu's sons eat when they lived in the forest? Tell me whether it was collected from the forest or cultivated.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Those bulls among men ate what was obtained from the forest and animals brought down with pure arrows, after having first offered it to the brahmanas. O king! When those great archers and warriors dwelt in the forest, brahmanas with fire,[50] and those without fire, followed them there. There were ten thousand great-souled snataka brahmanas who knew about the means of salvation. Yudhishthira sustained them there. After killing ruru deer, black antelopes and other sacrificial forest-dwelling animals with his bows, he offered them to brahmanas in accordance with the rituals. Not a single ill-complexioned or diseased person could be seen there. Nor was there anyone who was thin, weak, miserable or frightened.

Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, supreme among the Kouravas, maintained them like his beloved sons, relatives or brothers from the same womb. Like a mother, the illustrious Droupadi first served her husbands, then all the brahmanas, and then ate whatever food remained. For the sake of the meat of the deer, they wielded their bows and always made that race decay[51]—the king[52] towards the east, Bhimasena towards the south, the twins towards the west and also towards the north. Thus did they live in Kamyaka and five years passed. They were without Arjuna and were anxious about him. They engaged themselves in studying, meditating and sacrificing.'

345(48)

Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Ambika's son Dhritarashtra let out a deep and hot sigh. He summoned suta Sanjaya and told him, "The two Pandavas, Nakula and Sahadeva, are greatly illustrious sons of the gods and are like the king of the gods in their resplendence. They are steadfast in battle, can fight from a distance and have resolution. Their hands are swift and they are steadfast in their anger. They are always firm and speedy. When they advance in battle with Bhima and Arjuna at the forefront, they will be established with the valour of lions and will be as invincible as the Ashvins. O Sanjaya! I do not see any remnants of my soldiers left. Those two sons of the gods are maharathas and cannot be repulsed in battle. Their anger at Droupadi's oppression will not be assuaged. The Vrishnis are great archers. The Panchalas are greatly energetic. They are protected in battle by Vasudeva, who never wavers from the truth. The Parthas will burn down the armies of my sons in battle. O son of a suta! Led by Rama[53] and Krishna, when the Vrishnis advance in battle, even the mountains will not be able to withstand the force. In their midst, is the mighty archer Bhima, whose valour is terrible. He will roam around with an iron club that kills all warriors. The kings on my side will not be able to tolerate the roar of Gandiva, as loud as thunder, or the force of Bhima's club. It is then that I will remember the words of my well-wishers, which should have been remembered, but which I did not heed earlier because I was obedient to Duryodhana."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! That ignoring was your great transgression. Though capable, you were deluded and did not restrain your son. Having heard that the Pandavas had been vanquished at dice, Achyuta Madhusudana swiftly went to Kamyaka to show his respect to the Parthas. So did Drupada's sons, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. So did Virata, Dhrishtaketu and the maharatha Kekayas. O king! Through a spy, I have learnt everything that they talked about when they met the defeated Parthas and I have told you that. When they met, they decided that Madhusudana would be Phalguna's charioteer if there was a battle and Hari agreed.[54] Krishna was also angered when he saw the Parthas in that state, attired in black deerskin for their upper garments. He told Yudhishthira, 'At the time of the rajasuya, I witnessed the prosperity

of the Parthas in Indraprastha, so difficult to be obtained by other kings. I saw all the lords of the earth there, terrified because of the energy of your weapons—Vangas, Angas, Poundras, Udras, Cholas, Dravidas, Andhrakas, those who live along the shores of the ocean, those who live in cities, Simhalas, Barbaras, Mlecchas, those who live in forests, those from the western kingdoms, hundreds from along the ocean, Pahlavas, Daradas, all the Kiratas, Yavanas, Shakas, Harahunas, Chinas, Tukharas, Saindhavas, Jagudas, Ramathas, Mundas, those from kingdoms ruled by women, Tanganas and many others who came to serve you at the sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That prosperity was transient and has been taken away. I will take away the lives of those who have robbed you of it. O Kouravya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Rama,[55] Bhima, Arjuna, the twins, Akrura, Gada, Samba, Pradyumna, Ahuka, the brave Dhrishtadyumna and Shishupala's son,[56] I will today kill Duryodhana in battle, together with Karna, Duhshasana, Soubala and whoever else stands against us in battle. You will live in Hastinapura with your brothers. You will possess the prosperity that the sons of Dhritarashtra have. You will rule over this earth.' Then, in that assembly of warriors, the king[57] spoke to him and with the brave Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, they listened. 'O Janardana! I accept these words of yours to be true. O mighty-armed one! You will kill my enemies and their followers, but only after thirteen years have elapsed. O Keshava! Let me be true to my word. In the midst of the kings I gave my promise that I would dwell in the forest.' On hearing these words of Dharmaraja, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, those present in the assembly gave their promise and pacified the wrathful Keshava with sweet words that were appropriate for the occasion. Then, in Vasudeva's hearing, they told the unblemished Panchali,[58] 'O queen![59] It is certain that Duryodhana will part with his life because of your anger. O beautiful one! We promise that this will be true. Do not sorrow. O Krishna! There are those who laughed at you then, on seeing you angered. Their flesh will be devoured by laughing beasts and birds. Their blood will be drunk by vultures and jackals. There were those who dragged you by the head[60] at the assembly hall. O Panchali! You will see their bodies strewn on the ground, dragged and devoured relentlessly by carnivorous animals. There are those who oppressed you and others who ignored you. They will be beheaded and the earth will drink their blood.' Such were the many words that those bulls among men spoke. All of them were energetic warriors. All of them bore marks of battle. When thirteen years have elapsed, those maharathas appointed by Dharmaraja will advance against us, with Vasudeva at the forefront—Rama,[61] Krishna, Dhananjaya, Pradyumna, Samba, Yuyudhana,[62] Bhima, Madri's sons, the princes of Kekaya and the sons of Panchala, together with Dharmaraja. All these warriors of the world are great-souled and invincible. They will be accompanied by their followers and soldiers. They will be like angry lions with manes. Is there anyone who desires to live who can withstand

them in battle?"

'Dhritarashtra replied, "At the time of the gambling, Vidura told me, 'O lord of men! If you defeat the Pandavas, it is certain that this will bring about the end of the Kurus. A great fear will arise and there will be a torrent of blood. O suta! I think that this will now happen, the way Kshatta had described it to me earlier. It is certain that there will be a battle, after the time promised by the Pandavas has elapsed.'"'

346(49)

Janamejaya asked, 'When the great-souled Partha went to Shakra's world for the sake of the weapons, what did Yudhishthira and the other Pandavas do?'

Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Partha went to Shakra's world for the sake of the weapons, those bulls among men lived in Kamyaka, together with Krishna.[63] One day, the best of the Bharatas, together with Krishna, were unhappily seated in a deserted spot. They sorrowed over Dhananjaya. There were tears in their throats and they were miserable. All of them were flooded with grief on account of the separation from Dhananjaya and were miserable because of the loss of the kingdom.

'Then the mighty-armed Bhima spoke to Yudhishthira, "O great king! It was on your instructions that the bull among men went. The lives of the sons of Pandu are established in Arjuna. If he is destroyed, there is no doubt that we ourselves, the Panchalas and their sons, Satyaki and Vasudeva will be destroyed. That energetic one departed, without thinking about the many difficulties he would confront. Bibhatsu went on your instructions. What can cause greater grief than that? All of us have depended on the arms of that great-souled one, thinking that we will triumph over our enemies and win the earth. It was the influence of the one with the bow that prevented me from killing all of Dhritarashtra's sons, together with Soubala, in the midst of that sabha. We have the strength of our arms and we are controlling the anger for which, you are the reason. We are protected by Vasudeva. If Krishna and we had killed the enemies led by Karna, we would have ruled the earth, conquered through the strength of our arms. All of us are faced with this calamity because of your vice of gambling. O king! We do not lack in manliness. We are supremely strong among those who are strong. O great king! You must bear in mind the dharma of kshatriyas. It is not the dharma of kshatriyas to reside in the forest. The learned have said that the supreme dharma of kshatriyas is to rule over the kingdom. O king! You know the dharma of kshatriyas. Do not stray from that path of dharma. O king! Let us kill the sons of Dhritarashtra before the twelve[64] years have passed. Return from the forest and summon back Partha and Janardana. O great king! O lord of the earth! Let us kill their armies and battle formations in a great battle. I will send the sons of Dhritarashtra to another world. Together with Soubala, Duryodhana, Karna and whoever else wants to fight back, I will kill all the sons of Dhritarashtra. After I have pacified them, you can return again to the forest. O lord of

the earth! If we do this, no blame will be attached to you. O father![65] O destroyer of enemies! If a sin is committed, we can perform various sacrifices. O great king! Wiping it off in that way, we can attain supreme heaven. O king! This is the way it should be, if our king is not foolish or is not given to procrastination.[66] Indeed, you are always devoted to dharma. But it is certainly the way of the wise to kill those who are deceitful through deceitful means. There is no sin attached to killing deceitful ones through deceitful means. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Those who are learned in dharma say that in accordance with dharma, a day and a night are equal to an entire year. O illustrious one! O great king! We have heard the words from the Vedas that in times of calamity, one entire year is equal to a day. O Achyuta![67] Therefore, if the Vedas are the authority, regard the passage of thirteen years as equal to a single day. O destroyer of enemies! This is the time to kill Duryodhana and his followers. O king! Otherwise, he will bring the entire earth under his suzerainty." When Bhima said this, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira inhaled the fragrance of the Pandava's head and spoke to him in tones of pacification, "O mighty-armed one! There is no doubt that you will kill Suyodhana, together with Gandivadhanva, but only after the thirteen years have passed. O Partha! O illustrious one! You have said that the time has arrived. But I cannot utter a lie, because that finds no place in me. O Kounteya! O invincible one! You will kill Suyodhana and his followers, but without resorting to deceit, because that will certainly be sin." While Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was speaking to Bhima, the immensely fortunate and great rishi Brihadashva arrived.

'He was a follower of dharma. And when Dharmaraja, with dharma in his soul, saw him arrive, he worshipped him with madhuparka,[68] as is prescribed in the sacred texts. When he was rested and seated, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira looked at him and addressed him in these piteous words, "O illustrious one! I have been robbed of my riches and my kingdom in gambling with dice. I was challenged by those who were skilled in deceit and skilled in playing with dice. I am not skilled in dice and the deceitful ones had decided on a course of evil. My wife is more precious to me than my own life and she was dragged into the sabha. Is there any king on earth who is as misfortunate as I am? Have you seen anyone else? Have you heard of anyone else? I think that there is no man who is more miserable than I am." Brihadashva replied, "O great king! O Pandava! You have said you think that there is no man more unfortunate than you are. O unblemished one! O lord of the earth! On this, I can narrate an account, if you wish to hear it. This is the story of a king who was more miserable than you." At this, the king[69] told the illustrious one that he wished to hear the account. He wished to hear about the king who found himself in a situation like his own.

'Brihadashva said, "O king! O lord of the earth! O Achyuta! Then listen with your brothers. There was a king of the nishadhas by the name of Virasena. He had a son

named Nala, learned in the ways of dharma and artha. We have heard that this king was deceitfully defeated by Pushkara and though he did not deserve it, lived unhappily in the forest with his wife. When that king lived in the forest, he never had any horses, any chariots, any brothers or any kin. But you are surrounded by your brave brothers, who are the equals of the gods and by the foremost among brahmanas, who are like Brahma himself. Therefore, do not sorrow."

'Yudhishthira said, "O best among eloquent ones! I wish to hear in detail the account of that great-souled Nala. Please tell it to me."'

347(50)

'Brihadashva said, "There was a strong king named Nala, the son of Virasena. He had all the good qualities and was handsome. He was skilled with horses. He stood at the head of all the kings among men, like the king of the gods. He was supreme to everyone and had energy like that of the sun. This brave king of the nishadhas was learned in the Vedas and devoted to brahmanas. He was truthful and commanded a great akshouhini. He loved dice. Beautiful women desired him. He was generous and had control over his senses. He was a protector and supreme among archers. He was like Manu[70] himself. Like him, there was in Vidarbha, Bhima, whose valour was terrible.[71] He was brave and had all the qualities. He had no offspring and desired to have offspring. For the sake of offspring, with fixedness of purpose, he made every endeavour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmarshi named Damana came to him. O Indra among kings! Bhima desired offspring and was knowledgeable about dharma. With his wife, he offered homage to the greatly resplendent one and satisfied him. Gratified, Damana conferred a boon on him and his wife—a gem among daughters and three generous and extremely famous sons, Damayanti, Dama, Danta and the immensely resplendent Damana. They had all the qualities and all of them were fearful and terrible in valour.[72] Damayanti was beautiful, energetic, famous and fortunate. The slender-waisted one obtained fame in the world because of her good fortune. When she came of age, hundreds of ornamented slave girls and friends waited on her, like Shachi herself. Among them, Bhima's daughter, adorned in all the ornaments and flawless in her limbs, shone like a flash of lightning. She was extremely beautiful and her large eyes were like those of Shri. Such a beautiful one had not been seen or heard of before among gods, yakshas, men, or others. The beautiful lady disturbed the minds of the gods themselves.

'"Nala, tiger among men, was unsurpassed on earth. He was so handsome that he was like Kandarpa[73] personified. In wonder, they repeatedly praised Nala in her[74] presence and Damayanti before the king of Nishadha.[75] Having incessantly heard about each other's qualities, they desired each other, though they had not seen each other. O Kounteya! That desire for the other became very strong. Nala became incapable of

holding that desire in his heart. He retired alone to a grove near the inner quarters.[76] There he saw swans[77] whose wings were golden. As they were roaming in the grove, he grasped one bird. Then that roamer of the sky spoke to Nala, 'O king! Do not kill me. I will do that which will bring you pleasure. O king of the nishadhas! I will speak about you in Damayanti's presence, so that she never thinks of any other man but you.' Having been thus addressed, the king freed the swan and the swans ascended and flew to Vidarbha. Having arrived at the city of Vidarbha,[78] the birds descended from the sky before Damayanti and she saw them. On seeing those extraordinarily beautiful roamers of the sky, and surrounded by her friends, she happily wished to grasp them. The swans spread in different directions in that beautiful grove. Each lady then ran after a particular swan. The swan that Damayanti pursued took her to a secluded area and then addressed Damayanti in human language, 'O Damayanti! There is a king of the nishadhas by the name of Nala. He is like the Ashvins in beauty and there is no man equal to him. O beautiful one! O slender-waisted one! If you become his wife, your birth and your beauty will become successful. We have seen gods, gandharvas, men, serpents and rakshasas. But we have never seen one like him. One like him has not been seen before. You are a jewel among women. Nala is supreme among men. The union of the special with the special has all the qualities.' O lord of the earth! Thus did the swan speak to Damayanti and she replied to the swan. 'Speak this way to Nala.' O lord of the earth! The one who was born from an egg accordingly promised the lady from Vidarbha. He returned to Nishadha and told Nala everything."'

348(51)

'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of the swan, on account of Nala, Damayanti no longer had control over herself. Thinking about this, she became dejected, pale of complexion and thin. Damayanti became prone to sighing deeply. She would cast her glance up at the sky. She looked like one demented. She found no pleasure in her bed, in her seats or in enjoyment. She did not rest during the day or the night and continuously lamented and wept. Her friends saw her state and her form and knew from the signs that she was ill. O lord of men! Damayanti's crowd of friends reported this to the king of Vidarbha. They recounted her state. On hearing about this from Damayanti's crowd of friends, King Bhima began to think about the great task that he would have to perform for his daughter's sake. The king reflected on this and decided that his daughter had attained maturity. He saw that his task was to organize a svayamvara for Damayanti. O lord of the earth! O illustrious one! He invited all the brave lords of the earth to attend the svayamvara. On hearing that Damayanti's svayamvara would be held, on Bhima's instructions, all the kings came to King Bhima. The earth was filled with the roar of elephants, horses and chariots. Those great-souled kings could be seen with their decorated armies, bedecked in

colourful garlands and ornaments.

'"At this time, the two supreme and ancient rishis, the great-souled Narada and Parvata, who were greatly rigid in their vows, were roaming around and those great-souled ones went to Indra's world. They entered the palace of the king of the gods and were received with homage. The lord with the thousand eyes[79] worshipped them and asked about their welfare, their health and about everything else. Narada said, 'O lord! O god! O illustrious one! O Maghavan![80] We are well in every respect. The entire world is well and so are the kings.' Hearing the words of Narada, the slayer of Bala and Vritra[81] asked, 'The righteous lords of the earth give up their lives in fighting. When the time for death arrives through weapons, they go towards it without hesitation. This eternal world is theirs and every object of desire, as it is for me. But I no longer see those brave kshatriyas. Why do those kings no longer come to me as my beloved guests?' Thus addressed by Shakra, Narada replied, 'O illustrious one! Listen as to why these lords of the earth can no longer be seen. The king of Vidarbha has a famous daughter by the name of Damayanti. In her beauty, she surpasses all the women on earth. O Shakra! Her svayamvara is due to take place soon. All the kings and the princes are going there. O destroyer of Bala and Vritra! All the kings crave for this jewel of the world and desire her immensely.' When they were conversing thus, the lords of the world,[82] together with Agni, all supreme among the immortals, came before the king of the gods. All of them then heard the great words that Narada spoke. On hearing these words, they happily said that they would go too. O great king! With their followers and with their vehicles, all of them went to Vidarbha, where all the lords of the earth had gone. O Kounteya! On hearing about that gathering of kings, King Nala also set out, happy in his heart and with his mind fixed on Damayanti. On their way, the gods saw Nala on the ground. He was like Manmatha[83] personified in his richness of beauty. The lokapalas saw that he was as resplendent as the sun. They wondered at the richness of his beauty and forgot about their resolution.[84] The gods stopped their vimanas in the sky and descending from the sky, addressed the king of Nishadha, 'O Nala! O Nishadha! O Indra among kings! You are always devoted to the truth. O supreme among men! Help us and become our messenger.'"

349(52)

'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nala gave his promise to do so. He then joined his hands in salutation and asked them, 'Who are you? Who desires that I should be his messenger? What is the task that I am required to perform? Tell me in detail.' Thus addressed by Nishadha, Maghavan replied, 'Know that we are the immortals and that we have come here for Damayanti's sake. I am Indra. This is Agni. This is the lord of the waters.[85] O king! This is Yama, who brings an end to human

bodies. Go and tell Damayanti that the lokapalas, together with Indra, are arriving with a desire to see her. The gods Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama wish to obtain her. She should choose one of these gods for her husband.' Thus addressed by Shakra, Nala joined his hands in salutation and requested them not to send him for this purpose, as he had the same objective. The gods replied, 'O Nishadha! You have already promised to do our bidding. O Nishadha! How can you then fail to do what we ask. Go immediately.' Thus addressed by the gods, Nishadha again replied, 'How can I enter a palace that is guarded so well?' Shakra again told him that he would be able to enter. Having been thus addressed, he went to Damayanti's residence.

""There he saw the daughter of Vidarbha, surrounded by a crowd of friends. She was radiant in her form and fortune and was supremely beautiful. Her limbs were extremely delicate. Her waist was slender and her eyes were beautiful. In her radiance, she seemed to dim the light of the moon. On seeing the sweet-smiling one, his desire increased. But bearing in mind the promise that he had given, he restrained his wishes. The beautiful ladies were bewildered on seeing Nishadha. They arose from their seats, overcome by his energy. Astounded, but extremely delighted, they praised Nala. But they did not say anything to him. They only thought about it in their own minds. What beauty, what radiance, what fortitude exist in this great-souled one! Who is he? Is he a god, a yaksha or a gandharva? The beautiful ladies were overcome by his energy and were bashful. They were not able to speak a single word to him. Damayanti was also struck with wonder. But she smilingly spoke to the brave Nala, who was also smiling. 'Who are you? All your limbs are flawless and you are increasing my desire. O brave one! O unblemished one! You have arrived like an immortal. I wish to know how you have entered. How is it that you have not been noticed? On the strict instructions of the king, my palace is guarded well.' Having been thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, Nala replied, 'O fortunate one! Know me to be Nala. I have come here as a messenger of the gods. The gods Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama wish to obtain you. O beautiful one! Choose one of those gods as your husband. It is through their influence that I have been able to enter unnoticed. When I entered, no one saw me and no one restrained me. O fortunate one! It is for this purpose that I have been sent by the supreme among the gods. O beautiful one! Having heard this, make up your mind about what you wish to do.'""

350(53)

'Brihadashva said, "She bowed to the gods and smilingly told Nala, 'O king! What can I do for you? Tell me with love and respect. I, and whatever riches I possess, are all yours. O lord! Show me love with respect. O king! I have been tormented by the words of the swan. O brave one! It is for your sake that I have assembled the kings here. O one who shows respect! I love you. If you reject me, for your sake, I will have to find refuge

with poison, fire, water or the rope.'[86] Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, Nala replied, 'How do you desire a man when the lords of the worlds are here? I am not equal to the dust on the feet of those great-souled lords, the creators of the worlds. Turn your mind towards them. A mortal one who causes displeasure to the gods wishes for death. O beautiful and unblemished one! Therefore, save me by choosing from the supreme among the gods.' Then the sweet-smiling Damayanti, whose voice was choked with tears, replied to King Nala in soft words, 'O lord of men! I see a way, a way that will bring no sin. O king! Then no evil will be attached to you. O best of men! You and all the gods, with Indra at the forefront, must come together to where my svayamvara takes place. O lord of men! O tiger among men! There, in the presence of the lords of the world, I will choose you and no sin will be attached to you.' O lord of the earth! Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, King Nala returned to where the gods had assembled.

'"The lords of the worlds, together with their lord,[87] saw him return. On seeing him, they asked him about everything that had happened. The gods asked, 'O king! Did you see the sweet-smiling Damayanti? O king! O unblemished one! Tell us everything that she said.' Nala replied, 'As instructed by you, I entered Damayanti's palace. It had large and excellent rooms and was surrounded by elderly guards with staffs. When I entered, because of your energy, no man saw me, except for the daughter of the king. I saw her friends and they saw me too. O lords of the gods! All of them were astounded on seeing me. I told the one with the beautiful face everything about you. O supreme among the gods! But she has set her heart on me and will choose me. The lady said, "O best of men! Let all the gods come with you to my svayamvara. O supreme among men! O mighty-armed one! I will then choose you in their presence and no sin will be attached to you." O lords of the thirty![88] I have related to you exactly what occurred there. But it is for you to decide what should be done.'"'

351(54)

'Brihadashva said, "When the auspicious time and the sacred day and moment arrived, King Bhima summoned all the lords of the earth to the svayamvara. On hearing this, all the lords of the earth, oppressed by love, swiftly went there, hoping to win Damayanti. The kings entered the large arena, decorated with golden pillars and beautiful gates, like lions entering a mountain. All the lords of the earth seated themselves on various seats, all of them adorned with fragrant garlands and dazzling earrings encrusted with gems. That arena was filled with kings, like Bhogavati[89] with serpents, or a cave in a mountain with tigers. Their broad arms were seen to be like clubs, well formed and with auspicious marks, like five-headed serpents. Their hair was beautiful and their noses were handsome. With these, the faces of the kings were as resplendent as stars in the

firmament.

'"Then the fair-faced Damayanti entered the arena and her radiance stole the eyes and the hearts of the kings. On whatever part of her body the sight of those great-souled ones happened to fall first, their glances remained fixed there, without straying away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the names of the kings were being recounted, Bhima's daughter saw five men who were identical in appearance.[90] On seeing all of them there, undifferentiated in appearance, Vidarbha's daughter was doubtful about which one of them was King Nala. Whichever one she looked at, seemed to be King Nala. Thus the beautiful one reflected and debated in her mind. How will I know which are the gods and how will I know which is King Nala? Vidarbha's daughter thought in this way and was afflicted with grief. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As she debated in this way, she remembered what she had heard about the marks of the gods. 'I have heard from the elders about the marks of the gods. But when they are established on the ground in this way, those cannot be perceived.' Having decided this and having reflected on this in many ways, she resolved that the time had come to seek refuge with the gods. Having shown homage to the gods in mind and words, she joined her hands in salutation before the gods and said in a trembling voice, 'On hearing the words of the swan, I have chosen the Nishadha to be my husband. If those words are true, then let the gods direct me towards him. I have never deviated in my mind and my speech. If that is true, then let the gods direct me towards him. If it is true that the gods themselves have decided that the king of Nishadha should be my husband, then let the gods direct me towards him. The lords of the worlds and the great god[91] should display their own forms, so that I may know King Punyashloka.'[92] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Damayanti's piteous lamentation and determining that she was supremely in love with Nishadha, pure in mind, intelligence, devotion and love, the gods did what she had asked for and revealed themselves in their abilities to bear marks.[93] She then saw all the gods, without sweat and with fixed glances. Their garlands were untouched by dust and they stood there, without touching the ground. And she also saw Nishadha, touching the ground, with his shadow next to him. His garland was faded with dust and he was perspiring. He was also identified by the blinking of his eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She saw the gods and she also saw Punyashloka Nishadha. In accordance with dharma, Bhima's daughter chose him. Bashfully, the large-eyed one touched the end of his garment[94] and placed an extremely beautiful garland around his shoulders. Thus did the beautiful one choose him as her husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, the assembled kings suddenly let out sounds of lamentations. But the gods and maharshis uttered cries of approval, and struck with wonder, spoke words praising King Nala.

'"When Bhima's daughter chose Nishadha, all the immensely energetic lords of the

worlds were delighted. Together, they gave Nala eight boons.[95] Shachi's husband Shakra happily gave Nala the boon that he would be able to see him[96] at sacrifices and would attain the supreme of sacred goals. Agni gave him the boon that he would be present whenever Nishadha desired it. Hutashana[97] gave him worlds that were as resplendent as he[98] himself. Yama gave him the capacity to taste the essence of food and supreme establishment in dharma. The lord of the water[99] promised to be present whenever Nishadha desired and also gave a fragrant garland. Thus did each give two boons. Having granted these boons, the gods returned to the world of the gods. Having witnessed Damayanti's wedding in great wonder, the kings were extremely happy and returned whence they had come. O king! Having obtained a gem among women, King Punyashloka pleasured with her, like the slayer of Bala and Vritra with Shachi. The king was extremely happy and as resplendent as the sun. He pleased his subjects by protecting them in accordance with the dharma of the brave. Like Yayati, the son of Nahusha,[100] he performed ashvamedha and many other sacrifices, offering large quantities of gifts. With Damayanti, Nala, like an immortal, again pleasured himself in woods and groves full of flowers. That lord of men sacrificed and sported thus. The lord of the earth protected the earth and all its treasures."'

352(55)

'Brihadashva said, "After Bhima's daughter had chosen Nishadha and the immensely energetic lords of the worlds were returning, they saw Dvapara, together with Kali.[101] On seeing Kali, Shakra, the slayer of Bala and Vritra, asked him, 'O Kali! Tell me where you are going with Dvapara.' Then Kali told Shakra, 'I am going to Damayanti's svayamvara. My mind has gone out to her. On going there, I will choose her.' Indra smilingly told him, 'The svayamvara is over. In our presence, she has chosen King Nala as her husband.' Thus addressed by Shakra, Kali was struck with rage. He spoke to all the gods and uttered these words, 'In the midst of all the gods, she has chosen a man as her husband. Because of that, she certainly deserves severe chastisement.' When Kali spoke in this fashion, the gods replied, 'It is with our sanction that Damayanti has chosen Nala. Since he possesses all the qualities, who would not choose King Nala? He knows everything about dharma and observes all the vows. Truth, perseverance, generosity, austerity, purity, self-control and pacification can be found in him. It is certain that this king, tiger among men, is the equal of the lords of the worlds. O Kali! Such are the qualities of Nala. The deluded one, who wishes to curse him, only curses himself and kills himself. He suffers difficulties and immerses himself in a bottomless and great hell, without any means of crossing it.' Thus speaking to Kali and Dvapara, the gods left for heaven.

'"When the gods had departed, Kali told Dvapara, 'O Dvapara! I cannot control my

anger. I will take possession of Nala. I will dislodge him from his kingdom. He will not be able to sport with Bhima's daughter. Help me by entering the dice.'""[102]

353(56)

'Brihadashva said, "Having made this agreement with Dvapara, Kali went to the place where the king of the nishadhas was. Always looking for an opportunity to enter,[103] he lived in the land of the nishadhas. After staying there for twelve years, Kali found his chance. After having passed urine and touching water, nishadha performed the evening ceremony,[104] without purifying himself by washing his feet first. Then Kali possessed him. Having possessed Nala, he went to Pushkara[105] and told him, 'Come and play dice with Nala. With my help, you are certain to vanquish Nala in a game of dice. O king! Having vanquished King Nala, win over the Nishadha kingdom.' Thus addressed by Kali, Pushkara went to Kali. Kali went to Pushkara and became a bull among cows.[106]

'"Pushkara, the destroyer of enemy warriors, went to the brave Nala and repeatedly asked his brother to play dice with the bull.[107] At that, the great-souled king was incapable of refusing the challenge. Although Vidarbha's daughter[108] looked on, he decided that the time for setting a stake had come. Having been possessed by Kali, Nala then lost his silver, his gold,[109] his vehicles, his yokes and his garments. So crazy was he about the dice that none of his well-wishers could make him refrain from his insensible craving for gambling. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the citizens and all the advisers came to see the king so as to restrain the afflicted one. Then the suta[110] came and told Damayanti, 'All the citizens are waiting at the gate with a specific purpose. Nishadha should be told the reason why all the subjects have assembled. They know that the king is learned in dharma and artha. They are miserable at his addiction.' At that, Bhima's daughter was oppressed with distress. Her mind was overcome by grief. In a voice choked with tears she told Nishadha, 'O king! The citizens are waiting at the gate with a desire to see you. They are accompanied by the advisers and all of them are driven by devotion to the king. They wish to see you.' She said this repeatedly. But the king was possessed by Kali and did not reply at all to the slim-waisted and bright-eyed one who was lamenting. Then all the citizens and all the advisers decided that his standing was gone. In shame and misery, they returned home. O Yudhishthira! In this way, the gambling between Pushkara and Nala went on for several months. Punyashloka kept on losing."'

354(57)

'Brihadashva said, "Then Damayanti saw that King Punyashloka had lost his senses and because of the gambling, was like one maddened. O king! But Bhima's daughter was not

mad and was overcome by fear and grief. She thought about the great task that should be performed for the sake of the king. She was alarmed at his sin and wished to ensure his welfare. On seeing that Nala had lost all his possessions, she told her nurse, ‘O Brihatsena! As if on Nala’s instructions, go and bring all the advisers here. Go and tell them what objects have been lost and what riches still remain.’ Having heard of Nala’s summons, all the advisers remarked that their misfortune might have been reversed and returned. Thus all the subjects arrived for a second time and when Bhima’s daughter reported this, he still did not reply. On seeing that her husband did not utter a single sentence in reply, Damayanti was overcome by shame and returned again to her house. When she learnt that the dice were always being unfavourable towards Punyashloka and that Nala had lost all his possessions, she told her nurse, ‘O Brihatsena! O fortunate one! As if on Nala’s instructions, go again and bring the suta Varshneya here. A great task has to be performed.’ On hearing what Damayanti had said, Brihatsena summoned Varshneya through reliable servants.

‘“Bhima’s unblemished daughter was well versed about place and time. She knew that the time had come. She told Varshneya in a soft voice, ‘You know that the king has always behaved properly towards you. Now that his moment of distress has arrived, you should help him. The more the king is defeated by Pushkara, the more his addiction towards gambling grows. The dice behave as if in Pushkara’s control. Nala’s destruction through the dice is thus seen. He does not listen to the sentences of his well-wishers and relatives, as he should. I think that nothing will be left of the great-souled Nishadha. The king is so intoxicated that he does not welcome my words either. O charioteer! I have sought refuge with you. Act in accordance with my words. My mind is not peaceful, in case he is destroyed. Yoke Nala’s beloved steeds that have the speed of thought and taking the twins,[111] go to Kundina.[112] Leave the horses, the chariot and the children there, with my relatives. Then stay there if you wish, or go elsewhere.’ Varshneya, Nala’s charioteer, told Nala’s chief advisers about Damayanti’s words. O lord of the earth! They met, decided and gave their permission. He placed the twins on the chariot and left for Vidarbha. The suta left the horses and the excellent chariot there and also the daughter Indrasena[113] and the son Indrasena. Distressed and unhappy, he informed King Bhima about King Nala. He then roamed around and went to the city of Ayodhya. Extremely miserable, he presented himself to King Rituparna and was employed by the king as a charioteer.”’

355(58)

‘Brihadashva said, “After Varshneya left, because of Punyashloka’s gambling, Pushkara robbed him of his kingdom and whatever other riches remained. O king! When Nala had lost his kingdom, Pushkara laughingly told him, ‘Let our gambling continue. But what else do you have left as stake? Damayanti alone is left to you. Everything else has been

won by me. If you think it proper, let Damayanti be your stake now.' Thus addressed by Pushkara, Punyashloka was enraged. His heart seemed to be rent asunder and he said nothing in reply. Then the immensely famous Nala was driven by great anger. He looked at Pushkara and took off the ornaments from everywhere on his body. He wore only a single garment and was unclothed, increasing the misery of his well-wishers. Then, discarding his great prosperity, the king went out. Damayanti followed him, also attired in a single garment. With her, Nishadha spent three nights outside.[114]

'"O great king! Pushkara had an announcement made in the city. 'I will put to death anyone who sides with Nala.' O Yudhishthira! Because of Pushkara's words and because of his hatred, none of the citizens displayed any homage towards him.[115] Thus, though he was deserving of respect, he received no respect, though he was near the city. The king lived there for three nights, surviving only on water.

'"After several days had passed, Nala began to suffer from hunger. He saw some birds and their plumage seemed to be made of gold. The powerful lord of Nishadha began to think that this would be his food now and also his riches.[116] He then covered them with the garment he was wearing. All of them grasped that garment and ascended into the sky. When they rose up, the birds saw Nala standing on the ground, naked, miserable and with his face downcast. They uttered these words, 'O greatly foolish one! We are the dice. We came here to take away your garment. For we would have found no pleasure had you gone away with your garment.' On seeing the dice depart and himself naked, King Punyashloka told Damayanti, 'O unblemished one! These are the ones whose wrath robbed me of my riches. I cannot find a means of livelihood. I am miserable and hungry. Because of them, those of the Nishadha kingdom show me no homage. They have now become birds and have robbed me of my garment. I am your husband and face this great calamity. I am miserable and have lost my senses. Listen to my words, because they are for your own welfare. There are many roads here that head in a southern direction. They pass Avanti and Mount Rikshavat. There is the great mountain range of Vindhya and the river Payoshni that flows into the ocean. There are the hermitages of maharshis, with a lot of flowers and fruit. This road leads to Vidarbha and that one goes to Koshala. Beyond them, towards the south, is the region of Dakshinapatha.'[117] Damayanti was oppressed by grief and her voice was choked with tears. She spoke these piteous words to Nishadha, 'O king! My heart trembles and my limbs are going numb, as I repeatedly think about your resolution. You have lost your kingdom. You have lost your riches. You are naked, hungry and fatigued. How can I leave you in this secluded forest and leave? O great king! When you are fatigued and hungry and think about your earlier happiness in this terrible forest, I will reduce your misery. I tell you truthfully. It is the view of physicians that for all kinds of misery, there is no medicine that is equal to a wife.' Nala replied, 'O Damayanti! O slim-waisted one! What you have said is certainly true. When

a man is in misery, there is no medicine or friend equal to a wife. O timid one! Why are you afraid? I do not wish to abandon you. O unblemished one! I would abandon myself before abandoning you.' Damayanti said, 'O great king! If you did not wish to abandon me, why did you point out the road that leads in the direction of Vidarbha? O king! I also know that you should not abandon me. O lord of the earth! But since your mind is deluded, you might choose to do that. O supreme among men! You have repeatedly pointed out the road to me. O one with the radiance of immortals! That is the reason my sorrow is increasing. O king! If it is your intention that I should go to Vidarbha, then if you so desire, let us go there together. O one who shows respect! The king of Vidarbha will show you homage. O king! Honoured by him, you will dwell happily in our house.'"'

356(59)

'"Nala said, 'There is no doubt that your father's kingdom is my own. But I will never go there in these difficult circumstances. There was a time when I went there in my prosperity and increased your happiness. How can I go there in my misery and increase your unhappiness?'"

'Brihadashva said, "Thus King Nala repeatedly spoke to Damayanti. He comforted the fortunate one, now covered in only half her garment.[118] With only a single garment between them, they roamed here and there. They were hungry, thirsty and fatigued, and eventually arrived at a public dwelling house.[119] On reaching that dwelling house, the king who was the lord of Nishadha sat down with the daughter of Vidarbha on the bare ground. He was naked and filthy. His hair was dishevelled and he was covered with dust. He was tired. With Damayanti, he slept on the ground. The fortunate and delicate Damayanti, devoted to austerities, had suddenly been overtaken by misfortune. She slept. O lord of the earth! As Damayanti slept, King Nala could not sleep, as he had slept earlier, because his mind was agitated with grief. He thought about the loss of his kingdom and the desertion by all his well-wishers and the difficulties in the forest. He kept thinking about these. What will happen from my acting in this way? What will happen from my not acting in this way? Is it better for me to die? Or should I abandon her? She is devoted to me and has suffered this unhappiness for my sake. But without me, it is possible that she might go to her relatives. If she is with me, this supreme one will certainly confront more unhappiness. But if I desert her, it is possible that she might find happiness. The lord of men reflected on these repeatedly in many ways. Then he decided that it would be superior if he deserted Damayanti. Realizing that he had no garments and that she had only a single garment, the king thought that he would tear her garment in half. But how could one tear the garment without the beloved one waking up? Thinking thus, King Nala began to wander around that dwelling house. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nala walked here and there. Then, near that dwelling house, he found an excellent and unsheathed sword. That scorcher of enemies

used it to slice off half the garment. Leaving the daughter of Vidarbha asleep, he swiftly went away, bereft of his consciousness. But his heart was tied to her and he returned again to the dwelling house. On seeing Damayanti there, the king of Nishadha wept, 'My beloved one was earlier not seen by the wind or the sun. She is now sleeping, without any protection, on the ground of this dwelling house. The sweet-smiling one is clad in a sliced-off garment. When she regains consciousness, the one with the beautiful hips will be like one maddened. What will she do? Alone and deserted by me, how will this faithful and beautiful daughter of Bhima roam in this terrible forest, frequented by animals and predators?' Departing again and again, King Nala returned to the dwelling house again and again. He was drawn away by Kali but was drawn back by his love. It seemed as if the heart of the miserable one was divided into two. Like a swing, it went to the dwelling house and back from it. But Nala was attracted by Kali and deluded. Lamenting piteously many times, he deserted his sleeping wife. Touched by Kali, his soul was tainted and without thinking about it, the king went away, abandoning his miserable wife in that deserted forest."'

357(60)

'Brihadashva said, "When King Nala had departed, Damayanti awoke, having overcome her fatigue. The one with the beautiful hips was terrified in that deserted forest. She could not see her husband and was immersed in sorrow and misery.

'"Frightened because of Nishadha, she cried out aloud, 'O great king! O protector! O great king! O lord! Why did you forsake me? I am dead! I am destroyed! I am terrified in this deserted forest. O great king! You have always been knowledgeable in dharma. You have always spoken the truth. How could you have uttered a falsehood? While I was asleep, how could you have forsaken me in this forest? Why have you departed, abandoning a wife who was obedient and devoted to you, especially when she has caused you no harm? You have been wronged by your enemies. O lord of men! In earlier times, you had uttered some words in the presence of the lords of the worlds. How can you possibly make them come true? O bull among men! There has been enough of this jest. Let it not go any further. O invincible one! I am terrified. O lord! Show yourself to me. O king! I have seen you! I have seen you! O Nishadha! Stay there! I have seen you hidden behind the creepers. Why don't you reply to me? O Indra among kings! You are cruel! O king! You see me lamenting in this state, but do not come and comfort me in your arms. I am not sorrowing because of my own self, or because of anything else. O king! I am sorrowing because you will have to be alone. O king! In the evening, you will be thirsty, hungry and exhausted from labour. You will be under a tree and how will you exist without seeing me?' Thus she was immersed in terrible grief and blazing in her anger. Weeping and miserable, she dashed here and there. In one instant, the lady would stand up. In another instant, she would fall down unconscious. In one

instant, she was frightened. In another instant, she wept loudly. Bhima's faithful daughter was tormented by terrible grief. She was distraught and sighed again and again. Then she spoke in a tearful voice, 'Nishadha is suffering because of the curse of some being and may he also be miserable in grief. Whatever sorrow befalls us, may his sorrow be greater. May the evil-minded one who has done this evil to Nala meet with greater sorrow. May he live a life that is full of unhappiness.' Thus did the wife of the great-souled king lament. She searched for her husband in that forest frequented by wild beasts. Bhima's daughter was like one maddened. She lamented and ran here and there, crying 'Alas! O king!' She dashed like one who had lost her senses.

'"She repeatedly sorrowed and lamented in piteous tones, like a female osprey, and dried up.[120] Suddenly, Bhima's daughter came upon a boa constrictor.[121] As she came near, the giant one, who was hungry, grasped her. As she was being devoured by the serpent,[122] she was overcome by grief. She wasn't sorrowful because of her own self, but sorrowed more about Nishadha. 'O protector! I am being devoured in this deserted forest by this serpent, like one unprotected. Why don't you rush here? O Nishadha! How will you live when my memories come back to you? You will be freed from evil. You will again obtain your senses, your intelligence and your riches. O Nishadha! O tiger among kings! O giver of respect! When you are tired and hungry and exhausted, who will reduce your fatigue?' At that time, a hunter of animals was roaming in the deep forest. He heard the sound of her cries and swiftly came to where she was. He saw the long-eyed one there, being devoured by the serpent. The hunter of animals swiftly came to her aid. With a sharp weapon, he severed the serpent's head. The one who lived off hunting slashed at the serpent until it was motionless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The hunter freed her and cleaned her with water. He comforted her and asked her if she had eaten some food. 'O one with the eyes of a deer! Whom do you belong to? Why have you come to this forest? O beautiful one! How is it that you have encountered this great difficulty?' O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On his asking, Damayanti told him everything, exactly as it had occurred.

'"The hunter of animals saw that she was covered with only half a garment. Her breasts and hips were heavy. Her limbs were unblemished and delicate. Her face was like the full moon. The lashes of her eyes were curved and her speech was sweet. On seeing this, he was overcome by desire. In this state, the hunter[123] spoke to her in soft and gentle words. But the beautiful one saw that he was comforting her out of desire. Damayanti was devoted to her husband. On realizing the wishes of the evil one, she was consumed by a terrible rage and seemed to blaze in anger. The evil-minded and mean one was about to violate her out of desire, but saw that the inviolate one seemed to be like the flame of a blazing fire. Deprived of her husband and her kingdom, the miserable Damayanti cursed in her anger, since the time of using words had passed. 'If I have never thought of anyone other than Nishadha, then let this mean one, who makes a

living out of animals, fall down dead.' As soon as she had uttered these words, the one who made a living out of animals fell down lifeless on the ground, like a tree consumed by fire."'

358(61)

'Brihadashva said, "When the lotus-eyed one had slain the killer of animals, she entered another deserted and dreadful forest, resounding with the sounds of many crickets. The forest was full of lions, tigers, boars, bears, rurus and elephants. It was full of large numbers of diverse birds and was frequented by mlecchas and bandits. It was dense with shala trees, bamboos, *dhavas*,[124] ashvatthas,[125] *tindukas*,[126] ingudas,[127] kimshukas,[128] arjunas,[129] *arishtas*,[130] *chandanas*,[131] *shalmalas*,[132] *jambus*,[133] mangoes, lodhras,[134] *khadiras*,[135] *shakas*,[136] cane, *kashmaris*,[137] *amalakas*,[138] *plakshas*,[139] kadambas,[140] *udumburas*,[141] *badaris*,[142] bilvas, *nyagrodhas*,[143] priyalas,[144] talas,[145] *kharjuras*,[146] *haritakas*[147] and *vibhitakas*.[148] She saw mountains that were full of a hundred different kinds of minerals, groves that resonated with the sounds of birds, caves that were extraordinary to behold, rivers, lakes, ponds, many types of animals and birds, a large number of pishachas, serpents and rakshasas that were terrible in form, pools, tanks, mountain peaks everywhere, streams and wonderful oceans. There the daughter of the king of Vidarbha saw herds of buffaloes, boars, bears, monkeys and serpents. With supreme energy, fame, steadfastness and beauty, the daughter of Vidarbha began to roam around alone, looking for Nala. King Bhima's daughter was not frightened of anything. She wandered in that terrible forest, oppressed by her husband's misfortune. O king! Vidarbha's daughter lamented in great misery. Her limbs suffered from sorrow over her husband and sought refuge on a slab of stone.

"'Damayanti said, 'O one whose chest is like that of a lion! O mighty-armed one! O ruler of the people of Nishadha! O king! Where have you gone, abandoning me in this deserted forest? O brave one! You have performed sacrifices like ashvamedha and have given away large quantities of dakshina. O tiger among men! How is it that you have been false towards me? O tiger among men! O immensely radiant one! O bull among kings! O fortunate one! Make the words you uttered in my presence come true. O lord of the earth! You should also remember what the swans that roam in the sky said in your presence and what they said in my presence. O best among men! The four Vedas, studied with their extended branches and sub-branches, can be on one side and truth alone can balance them on the other side. O lord of men! O destroyer of enemies! O brave one! Therefore, you should follow the truth and make true what you promised in my presence. Alas, brave one! O unblemished one! Is it that I am no longer desired by you? Why do you not reply to me in this terrible forest? This terrible and fearful king of the forests is oppressing me with its wide-open jaws, as if it is hungry. Why don't you

save me? You always used to say that I was your beloved and there was no second one who was dearer. O king descended from the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! Make the words you uttered earlier come true. O ruler of men! Your beloved wife is lamenting, like one maddened. You desire her and she desires you. O protector! Why don't you reply to me? I am thin, miserable, pale and dirty. O lord of the earth! I am clad only in half a garment. I am alone and lamenting like one unprotected. O large-eyed one! I am like a solitary deer that has strayed from its herd. O oppressor of enemies! You are deserving of honour. But you do not honour me, when I am weeping thus. O great king! It is a faithful wife who is alone in this great forest. It is your wife who is speaking to you. Why don't you reply? O supreme among men! You were born in a noble lineage and have good conduct. You are handsome in all your limbs. But I do not see you today on this mountain. This great and terrible forest is frequented by lions and tigers. O ruler of Nishadha! Are you sleeping, seated or standing here? O best of men! Or have you left, extending my misery? I am oppressed by grief on account of you. In my misery, whom shall I ask "Have you by any chance seen King Nala wandering in this forest?" Today, who will tell me if Nala is lost in the forest? He is handsome and great-souled. He is the destroyer of enemy formations. I am looking for King Nala, with eyes like that of the lotus. Today, from whom will I hear the sweet words that he[149] is here? The tiger, the king of the forest, is advancing to meet me. He is handsome, with four teeth and a mighty jaw. But I am not frightened of him. I will tell him, "You are the king of the animals and the lord of this forest. Know me to be Damayanti, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha. I am the wife of the king of Nishadha, Nala, the slayer of enemies. O lord of animals! I am alone and am looking for my husband. I am oppressed by sorrow and I am thin. If you have seen Nala, please comfort me. O lord of the forest! O supreme among animals! If on the other hand, you know nothing about Nala, then eat me up and free me from this misery." The king of animals hears my lamentations in this forest. But on his own, he makes his way towards the sweet waters of the river that flows to the ocean.

"""This rocky mountain is sacred. It has many tall peaks. They are radiant and beautiful in their many hues. They stretch up to the sky. It is full of many minerals and is adorned with a myriad stones. It rises up like a flagstaff of this great forest. It is frequented by lions, tigers, elephants, boars, bears and deer. It resounds on all sides with the noise of many types of birds. It is adorned with kimshukas, ashokas, *bakulas*[150] and *pumnagas*.[151] There are many streams and peaks frequented by birds. I will now ask this king of mountains about the king.[152] "O illustrious one! O best of mountains! O divine-looking one! O famous one! O bringer of much fortune! O one who holds up the earth! I am seeking refuge with you and am bowing down before you. I am prostrating myself before you. Know that I am the daughter of a king. I am the daughter-in-law of a

king. I am the wife of a king. I am famous by the name of Damayanti. My father is maharatha King Bhima, the lord of Vidarbha. He is the lord of the earth and the protector of the four varnas. He has performed rajasuya and ashvamedha sacrifices and offered a lot of dakshina. He is a revered one, best among kings. He has eyes that are large, beautiful and arched. He is like a brahmana and observes righteous conduct. He follows the truth and is free from jealousy. He always follows good conduct and has great prosperity. He is pure and observes dharma. He is a lord who has defeated masses of his enemies. He is one who completely protects the subjects of Vidarbha. O illustrious one! Know me, the one present before you, to be his daughter. O great mountain! My father-in-law is supreme among men and is the lord of Nishadha. He is famous by the name of Virasena, a name that was well chosen. That king's son is brave and handsome and truth is his valour. He inherited the kingdom from his father and rules it well. He is the destroyer of enemies and is known by the names of Nala and Punyashloka. He is like a brahmana and is knowledgeable in the Vedas. He is eloquent and the performer of sacred deeds. He is a drinker of soma and maintains the fire.[153] He performs sacrifices and is a giver. He is a warrior and rules fairly. O best of mountains! Know that it is his wife who has come before you. I have lost my prosperity and I am without my husband. I am without a protector and I am beset by difficulty. I am looking for my husband, he who is supreme among the best of men. O supreme among mountains! You have hundreds of peaks that reach up into the sky. Is there any chance that you have seen King Nala in this terrible forest? His gait is like that of a king of elephants. He is valiant and wise. His arms are long and he is easily angered. He is brave and follows the truth. My husband has forbearance and is immensely famous. Is there any chance that Nala, king of the nishadhas, has been seen by you? O best of mountains! I am lamenting and I am alone. I am desolate. Why don't you console me now, as you would a miserable daughter?"

""'O brave one! O valiant one! O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! O one who is devoted to the truth! O lord of the earth! O king! If you are in this forest, then show yourself. When will I again hear Nishadha's gentle and deep voice, like the sound of the clouds and like nectar to me? Let the beautiful words of the great-souled king address me as "Daughter of Vidarbha". It is a voice that follows the sacred traditions,[154] brings welfare and is the dispeller of my sorrow.'"

'Brihadashva said, "Having spoken in this way to the best of the mountains, Damayanti, the daughter of the king, then left for the northern direction. After having wandered for three days and nights, the beautiful lady saw an unequalled forest. It was as beautiful as a celestial garden and was populated by ascetics like Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Atri. These ascetics were self-controlled, restrained in food and were calm and pure. They lived on water and air. They only ate leaves. They were immensely fortunate and had controlled their senses. They were desirous of seeing the path to heaven. They were

clad in bark and deerskin. These sages had mastered their senses. She saw that beautiful circle of hermitages, populated by ascetics. She saw the cluster of hermitages, frequented by many kinds of animals and large numbers of monkeys, in addition to the ascetics.

'"Her brows were lovely. Her hair was beautiful. Her hips were beautiful. Her breasts were beautiful. Her teeth and face were beautiful. She was radiant and she walked firmly. Her firm gait was rolling. The one who was loved by Virasena's son entered the circle of hermitages. She was immensely fortunate and a gem among women. She was the proud Damayanti. She bowed in obeisance before the aged ascetics and stood there in humility. All the ascetics uttered words of welcome. Those who were rich in austerities showed her homage in accordance with the prescribed norms and asked her to seat herself. 'Tell us what we can do for you,' they said. Then the one with the beautiful hips replied, 'O unblemished ones! O immensely fortunate ones! How do the austerities, the fires, dharma, the animals and the birds fare? Does everything proceed well? How about the following of your own dharma?' They said, 'O fortunate lady! O famous one! Everything goes well here. You are flawless in all your limbs. Tell us who you are and what you wish for. We are greatly amazed at seeing your supreme beauty and radiance. Do not sorrow and be comforted. Are you the great goddess of this forest or this mountain or this river? O fortunate and unblemished one! Tell us the truth.'

'"She told the rishis, 'O brahmanas! I am not the goddess of this forest or this mountain. Nor am I the goddess of this river. O you who are rich in austerities! Know me to be a woman. If all of you listen, I will tell you my account in detail. In the land of Vidarbha, there is an immensely radiant king by the name of Bhima. O supreme among brahmanas! All of you know me to be his daughter. The immensely famous and wise Nala is the king of Nishadha. He is brave and victorious in battle and that lord of the earth is my husband. He devotes himself to worshipping the gods and takes care of the brahmanas. He is immensely fortunate and immensely radiant and is the protector of the lineage of Nishadha. He observes the truth and is learned in dharma. He is wise and devoted to the truth. He is the destroyer of enemies. He is like a brahmana and is devoted to the gods. He is prosperous and the destroyer of the cities of enemies. That best of kings is named Nala and his radiance is the equal of that of the king of the gods. He is my husband. His eyes are large and his face is like the full moon. He is the destroyer of enemies. He has made offerings of the chief sacrifices and he is learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. He is as resplendent as the sun and the moon and he has killed his enemies in battle. That lord of the earth was devoted to true dharma. However, he was challenged to a game of dice by some evil ones among men, those who were skilled in deceit and wished him ill. He was defeated through their skills and deceit and he lost his kingdom and his riches. Know me to be the wife of that bull among kings. Know that I am famous by the name of Damayanti and desire to see my husband. I am miserable and am wandering everywhere in these woods, mountains, lakes, rivers,

ponds and forests. I am sorrowfully searching for my husband Nala. He is great-souled, skilled in the use of weapons and learned in war. O lords! By any chance, has a king by that name come to this beautiful hermitage? He is the lord of Nishadha and his name is Nala. O brahmanas! It is for his sake that I have come to this dreadful, terrible, fearful and horrible forest, frequented by tigers and animals. If I cannot find King Nala in a few days and nights, I will ensure my own welfare by freeing myself from this body. What is the purpose of my being alive, without that bull among men? What will become of me now, oppressed as I am out of sorrow for my husband?' Thus did Damayanti, Bhima's daughter, lament alone in that forest. The ascetics who always spoke the truth told her, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! The consequence of all this will be fortunate. Through the powers of our austerities, we can see that you will soon find Nishadha Nala, the ruler of Nishadha and the destroyer of his enemies. O Bhima's daughter! You will see the best of those who uphold dharma. He will be freed from his fever and absolved of all his sins. He will be adorned with all the gems. He will be in his supreme city and will defeat all his enemies. O fortunate one! You will see your husband the king in fortunate circumstances, creating fear in the minds of his enemies and dispelling sorrow from the minds of his well-wishers.' Having thus spoken to Nala's beloved queen, the daughter of a king, the ascetics disappeared, together with their sacrificial fires and their hermitages. On witnessing this greatly extraordinary event, Damayanti, whose limbs were unblemished and who was the daughter-in-law of Virasena, was astounded. Was it a dream that I saw? What had occurred here? Where are all the ascetics and where is that circle of hermitages? Where are the pure waters of that beautiful river, frequented by many kinds of birds? Where is that mountain now, adorned with fruits and flowers? Bhima's daughter, the sweet-smiling Damayanti, thought about these for some time. She was miserable because of sorrow for her husband and her face turned pale.

'"She went to another region. She lamented, her voice choking with sobs and her eyes filled with tears. Then she saw an ashoka tree there. She went to that flowering ashoka tree, supreme among trees. It was weighed down with its branches and resounded with the notes of birds. 'Alas! In the midst of this forest, there is this beautiful tree. Burdened under its weight, it is as beautiful as the king of Dramida.[155] O beautiful ashoka![156] Free me from my sorrow. Is there any chance that you have seen the king, freed from sorrow and fear? He who is named Nala is Damayanti's beloved husband and the destroyer of enemies. Have you seen my beloved, the king of the Nishadhas? His body and skin are delicate and he is attired in only half a garment. Suffering through his vice, the brave one has resorted to the forest. O ashoka! Act accordingly,[157] so that I can go away from you without any sorrow. O ashoka! Be truthful to your name. Be the one who removes sorrow and dispel my sorrow.' Thus did the distressed one speak to the ashoka tree, and circled it thrice. Then Bhima's beautiful daughter entered a region that was even more terrible. She saw many trees and many streams there, many beautiful

mountains and many kinds of animals and birds. Wandering in search of her husband, Bhima's daughter saw many valleys, slopes and extraordinary rivers.

'"After the sweet-smiling Damayanti had travelled for a long time, she saw a large caravan with many elephants, horses and chariots. It was climbing along the banks of a beautiful river, with clear and pure water. The water was cool and the river was wide. It had pools and was covered with cane. It resounded to the noise of cranes, ospreys and chakravakas.[158] It was full of tortoises, crocodiles and large fish and adorned with sandbanks and islands. As soon as Nala's famous wife saw that large caravan, the one with the beautiful hips approached it and entered among the people there. She was sorrowful and looked like one demented. She was covered in only half a garment. She was thin, pale and dirty. Her hair was covered with dust. On seeing her thus, some of the men were frightened and began to run away. Others began to think about this, while others cried out. Some laughed at her and others showed their anger. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But there were some who took pity on her and began to ask her questions. 'O fortunate one! Who are you and whom do you belong to? What are you looking for in this forest? We are sorrowful on seeing you. Are you by any chance a woman? Tell us truthfully. Are you the goddess of the forest, the mountain or the region? O fortunate one! We are seeking refuge with you. Are you a *yakshi*, a *rakshasi*,[159] or a beautiful woman? Comfort us in every way. O unblemished one! Protect us. O fortunate one! Ensure in every way that this caravan can swiftly leave this place. Ensure this. We seek refuge with you.' Damayanti, the king's daughter, was thus addressed by the men from the caravan. Oppressed because of her husband's vice, the faithful one then replied to the leader of the caravan, the caravan and the men who were there—young and old and children, and the ones who were the guides for the caravan. 'Know me to be a woman. I am the daughter of a king of men. I am the daughter-in-law of a king and I am the wife of a king. I am yearning to catch sight of my husband. The king of Vidarbha is my father. My husband is the king of Nishadha. He is immensely famous by the name of Nala and it is that unvanquished one that I am searching for. If you know about the king, quickly tell me about my beloved Nala. He is a tiger among kings and the destroyer of masses of his enemies.' The leader of that large caravan was named Shuchi. On hearing the words of the unblemished one, he replied, 'O fortunate one! Listen to my words. O sweet-smiling one! I am a merchant and the leader of this caravan. I have not seen a man by the name of Nala. I have only seen this fearful forest frequented by elephants, leopards, buffaloes, tigers, bears and deer. No men inhabit it. May Manibhadra, the king of the yakshas, favour us today.' She then told all the merchants and the leader of the caravan, 'Please tell me where this caravan is going.' The leader of the caravan replied, 'This caravan belongs to Subahu, the truthful king of Chedi. O daughter of a king! It is going swiftly to that country for the sake of profit.'"'

'Brihadashva said, "The one with the unblemished limbs heard the words of the leader of the caravan. Desirous of seeing her husband, she accompanied him. After a long time and many days had passed, the merchants saw a pond in the midst of that large and terrible forest. It was extensive and beautiful on all sides. It was fragrant with lotuses. It was charming, with a lot of grass and kindling and had a lot of roots and fruit. It was frequented by masses of many kinds of birds. They saw that the water was clean and delightful and brought pleasure to the mind. Since the animals of transport were extremely tired, they resolved to rest there. With the permission of the leader of the caravan, they entered that supreme forest. When the day moved westwards, that great caravan settled down to rest. When it was midnight, everything was quiet. The tired caravan was asleep.

'"A herd of elephants arrived to drink at a mountain stream and the water overflowed with their musk. They saw the supreme caravan asleep along their path, together with other elephants.[160] They suddenly trampled them, as they were asleep on the ground. A wail arose from the merchants as they sought for protection. They were blind from sleep and in their great fear, dashed towards the creepers in the forest. Some men were killed by the tusks of the elephants. Others were trampled by the feet. In great fear, a large number of cattle, donkeys, camels and horses and those who were on foot, fled. They injured each other. Uttering terrible roars, they fell down on the ground. Some climbed trees and when those broke, fell down on the uneven ground. In this way, that prosperous group of merchants was destroyed. When it was morning, the men who were still alive emerged from the creepers in the forest and sorrowed over the slaughter that had taken place. O lord of men! They grieved for brother, father, son and friend. The daughter of the king of Vidarbha lamented, 'What evil act have I committed in the past? I found an ocean of men in this deserted forest. Through my ill fortune, they have now been destroyed by a herd of elephants. It is certain that I will suffer more, for a long time to come. I have heard from the aged that no one dies before the time has come. Had that not been true, my miserable self would have been killed by this herd of elephants today. Indeed, nothing befalls men, if not brought about by destiny. I committed no sin, not even as a child, or in deeds, thought or words. What has brought about this misery? At the time of the svayamvara, the assembled gods who are the lords of the worlds were rejected by me for the sake of Nala. It must be because of their influence that I suffer this separation now.' The beautiful-limbed one sorrowed and lamented in this fashion. O tiger among men! She left with the brahmanas, learned in the Vedas, who had survived. She was miserable and overcome with sorrow.

'"After travelling for a long time, she arrived in the evening at a great city. This belonged to Subahu, the truthful king of Chedi. She entered that supreme city, clad only in half a garment. She was pale, thin and miserable. Her hair was loose and had not

been washed. She walked like one who was demented. The citizens saw her enter the capital of Chedi in this way. In their curiosity, vulgar boys followed the lady. Surrounded by them, she approached the royal residence. The king's mother saw her from the palace, surrounded by these people. She restrained the people. O king! In her amazement, she made Damayanti ascend into that supreme palace and asked her, 'You have clearly been overtaken by misfortune. How is your form so beautiful? You blaze like lightning in the clouds. Tell me. Who are you and whom do you belong to? Even though you are shorn of ornaments, your form cannot be human. Your radiance is like that of an immortal or a brahmana. Though helpless, you have not been scared of these men.' On hearing these words, Bhima's daughter replied thus, 'Know me to be a woman who follows the same vows as her husband. Know me to be a *sairandhri*[161] of noble birth. I am a maidservant and live wherever I wish. I live alone on fruits and roots and find a bed wherever evening falls. My husband has innumerable qualities and has always been devoted to me. I have always followed my valiant husband, like a shadow. It was through ill fortune that he was extremely addicted to gambling. He was defeated in a game of dice and left alone for the forest. The brave one was clad in a single garment and was maddened with grief. So as to comfort him, I followed him into the forest. One day, in that forest, the brave one was overcome by hunger and thirst and had to go elsewhere. He was careless and lost even the single garment that he possessed. He was naked and maddened and lost whatever senses he possessed. I followed him, clad in my garment. But I could not sleep for many nights. Then, after a long time, I fell asleep and he abandoned me, though I had done no harm. He sliced my garment into two. I have been searching for my husband, tormented by grief, day and night. But I have not been able to find my beloved, who is the lord of my life and riches and like an immortal to me.' Her eyes filled with tears, she lamented thus in many ways. Bhima's daughter suffered. The king's mother, who herself suffered with her, then told her, 'O fortunate one! Stay with me, I am pleased with you. O blessed one! My men will hunt out your husband. Or perhaps, while he is roaming around here and there, he may arrive here on his own. O blessed one! Live here and you will get your husband back.' On hearing these words of the king's mother, Damayanti replied, 'O mother of brave ones! I can live with you, but I will not eat leftover food. Nor will I wash the feet of others. I will never speak to other men. If any man solicits me, he must be punished. But in the course of searching for my husband, I will see brahmanas. If this can be done, I will certainly stay with you. But if it is otherwise, my heart will never allow me to stay.' The king's mother told her with a happy mind, 'I will do all this. A vow like this should be praised.' O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of Bhima's daughter, the king's mother told her daughter Sunanda, 'O Sunanda! Though she will be a sairandhri, know her to be like a goddess. Always enjoy yourself with her, without any anxiety in your mind.'"'

‘Brihadashva said, “O lord of the earth! When King Nala had abandoned Damayanti, he saw a great forest fire in that deep forest. From the midst of the fire, he heard the voice of a being. It cried again and again, ‘Come here, Nala! Come here, Punyashloka!’ Nala replied, ‘Do not be afraid,’ and entered the centre of the fire.[162]

He saw the king of the snakes lying there in coils. Trembling, the serpent joined his hands in salutation and told Nala, ‘O king! Know me to a serpent named Karkotaka. O king! I had once captured an innocent brahmarshi who was extremely great in austerities. O lord of men! He had cursed me in his anger. Because of his curse, I am unable to move even a step from this place. If you rescue me, I will teach you that which will ensure your welfare. I will be your friend and there is no serpent who is my equal. I will become very light. Pick me up swiftly and leave.’ Having spoken these words, the lord of the serpents became as small as a thumb. Grasping him, Nala went to a region that was free of flames. He came to an open space that was free of the black-trailed fire.

‘“He wished to let the serpent go. But Karkotaka again told him, ‘O Nishadha! Walk on and count your steps as you proceed. O great king! I will ensure your great welfare when you do this.’ At that, he began to count and he was bitten at the tenth step. As soon as he had been bitten, his form instantly changed. On witnessing his deformed body, Nala stopped, looked at himself and was astounded. The lord of the earth saw that the serpent had assumed his own form. Then the serpent Karkotaka consoled Nala and said, ‘I have brought this change in your form so that no one may recognize you. O Nala! I have done this so that the person who has injured you with this great distress will unhappily reside inside you, stung by my venom.[163] O great king! As long as he does not free you, he will hurt from my venom all over his body. He will suffer from misery as long as he lives there. O lord of men! You were innocent and did not deserve to be harmed. I have protected you from the anger and envy of the one who has cheated you. O tiger among men! O lord of men! You will no longer face any fear from enemies who have fangs or from those who have knowledge of the brahman.[164] O king! You will suffer no pain on account of the poison. O Indra among kings! You will always be victorious in battles. O king! Go from here and say that you are the suta Bahuka. Go to Rituparna, who is extremely skilled in gambling with dice. O lord of the nishadhas! Leave now for the beautiful city of Ayodhya. In exchange for your skill with horses, that king[165] will give you the skill with dice. That prosperous one, descended from the lineage of Ikshvaku, will become your friend. When you have become skilled with the dice, you will ensure your welfare and prosperity. You will be reunited with your wife. Banish all sorrow from your mind. I tell you truthfully that you will obtain your kingdom and your children. O lord of men! When you desire your own form back, recall me in your mind and clad yourself in these garments. On wearing these garments, you

will obtain your own form back.' Having said this, he then gave him two divine garments. O Kourava! O king! Having thus instructed Nala and given him the garments, the king of serpents disappeared, then and there."'

361(64)

'Brihadashva said, "When the serpent disappeared, Nishadha Nala left for Rituparna's city and entered there on the tenth day. He went before the king and spoke these words, 'I am Bahuka. I am skilled in driving horses and there is no one on earth who is my equal. I am skilled and can be asked about all difficulties connected with artha. I also know the art of cooking and especially on this, there is no one better than I am. If there is anything in this world connected with artisanship or any other difficult matter, I will seek to accomplish them all. O Rituparna! Therefore, maintain me.' Rituparna replied, 'O Bahuka! O blessed one! Reside with me. You will do all this. My mind has always been particularly attracted to the question of speed. Devise some means of yoking so that my horses travel fast. Be the superintendent of my stables and your salary will be a hundred thousand. Varshneya and Jivala[166] will always follow your instructions. O Bahuka! Spend your days happily with them and reside with me.' Having been thus addressed and honoured, Nala lived there in Rituparna's city, in the company of Varshneya and Jivala.

'"While living there, the king continued to think about the daughter of Vidarbha. Every evening, he recited a shloka which said, 'O ascetic! Hungry, thirsty, fatigued and miserable, where are you? Do you keep thinking about that unfortunate one? Whom are you attached to now?' Having heard the king recite this in the night, Jivala said, 'O Bahuka! I wish to hear about the one over whom you always sorrow.' Thus addressed, King Nala replied, 'There was one who lost his senses. There was a lady he thought much of and she was firmer towards him. Because of a certain reason, that unfortunate one was separated from her. Separated from her, that evil-minded one roams around, oppressed by unhappiness. Day and night, he is tormented by sorrow and cannot sleep. Remembering her at night, he recites this shloka. Having wandered around the entire earth and having obtained some things somewhere, he has now settled down, though he doesn't deserve to. Remembering her, he always sorrows. That woman even followed the man into the difficulties of the forest. But the one with limited virtue abandoned her and it is difficult for her to be still alive. She is alone, young, inexperienced about the roads and unaccustomed to difficulties. She is hungry and thirsty and it is difficult for her to be still alive. Predators always roam in that great and terrible forest. O respected one! She was abandoned by the one with limited virtue, the evil-minded one.' Thus did the king of Nishadha remember Damayanti, while he lived a life of disguise in the king's house."'

'Brihadashva said, "When Nala had lost his kingdom and had left for the forest with his wife, Bhima sent brahmanas to search out and find Nala. Bhima gave them a lot of riches and asked them to go and find Nala and his daughter Damayanti. 'Accomplish this task and find where the king of Nishadha is. I will give one thousand cows to whoever does this. I will give him a village to live in and it will be the size of a city. Even if Nala and Damayanti are not brought back, but are only discovered, I will give riches equal to ten thousand cows.' Having been thus addressed, the brahmanas happily left in all the directions. They looked for Nishadha and his wife in many cities and countries.

'"There was a brahmana named Sudeva. In his search, he came to the beautiful city of Chedi and saw Vidarbha's daughter in the king's palace. At that time, she was with Sunanda and it was the sacred time for the king to say his prayers. Only a little bit of her great beauty could be seen, like the luminosity of the sun engulfed in a net of haze. On seeing that large-eyed one, though she was extremely thin and dirty, he used different arguments to deduce that she was Bhima's daughter. Sudeva said, 'This lady's beauty is exactly like what I have seen before. After seeing her, I have accomplished my objective today. She is like Shri and brings pleasure to the worlds. Her face is like the full moon. She is dark. Her breasts are beautifully rounded. Through her radiance, this goddess dispels darkness in all the directions. Her eyes are beautiful, like the lotus or the palasha. She looks like Manmatha's Rati.[167] She is desired by all the worlds, like the rays of the full moon. Because of destiny and the adversity of fate, she has been dislodged from the lake of Vidarbha. Her limbs are encrusted with dirt and mud, exactly like the stalk of a lotus. Or she is like the night of the full moon when the moon has been swallowed up by Rahu.[168] She is miserable and despondent because of sorrow for her husband, like the course of a river that has run dry. She looks like a pond of lotuses devastated by the trunks of elephants, with the flowers decayed and the birds scattered in fear. She is delicate and her limbs are of noble lineage. She should be in a house that is a store of jewels. But she burns in the heat like the uprooted stalk of a lotus. She has the qualities of beauty and generosity. However, though she deserves them, she is not adorned in ornaments. She is like a sliver of the moon in the sky, when it is covered by dark clouds. She is deprived of objects of desire. She has been separated from her loved ones and distanced from her relatives. The miserable one sustains her body, in the hope of seeing her husband again. The husband is the supreme ornament for a woman, even if she has no other ornaments. Without him, even a beautiful woman does not seem beautiful. Without her, Nala must be facing great difficulties. How does he hold up his body, without immersing himself in sorrow? She is there, with eyes like a lotus with a hundred petals. She is one who deserves happiness. But seeing her unhappy, my mind also suffers. When will this radiant one reach the other shore, overcoming this unhappiness? When will this faithful one unite with her husband, like Rohini with the

moon?[169] The Nishadha will certainly be delighted when he gets her back. The king who has lost his kingdom will regain it and the earth with it. Nishadha deserves Vidarbha's daughter and the black-eyed one deserves him. They are similar in conduct and age. They are similar in lineage. She is anxious to see her husband and he is immensely brave and powerful. It is my duty to comfort the wife. I will console the one with a face like that of the full moon. She has never before witnessed the misery she is suffering now. Because of her sorrow, she is now reflecting all the time.' Through different signs and arguments, he arrived at this conclusion.

'"The brahmana Sudeva then approached Bhima's daughter and said, 'O Vidarbha's daughter! I am Sudeva. I am your brother's beloved friend. I have come here on the instructions of King Bhima. I have come here looking for you. O queen! Your father is well and so are your mother and brothers. Your son and daughter, who will have long lives, are well. But because of you, though they are alive, the large numbers of your relatives seem to be bereft of their senses.' O Yudhishthira! Damayanti recognized Sudeva and one after another, asked him about all her well-wishers. O king! On suddenly seeing Sudeva, the best of brahmanas and her brother's friend, Vidarbha's daughter was overcome by grief and wept piteously. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sunanda saw her weeping there, overcome by grief, and conversing alone with Sudeva. She sent a message to her mother, 'Sairandhri is weeping piteously, ever since she met a brahmana. If you think fit, find out the reason.' Then the mother of the king of Chedi left the king's inner quarters and went to where the lady was meeting the brahmana. O lord of the earth! The king's mother summoned Sudeva and asked, 'Whose wife is this beautiful one and whose daughter? How has the one with the beautiful eyes been separated from her relatives and her husband? O brahmana! Do you know how she has come to this state? I wish to hear everything from you in complete detail. I am asking about the lady whose form is like that of a goddess. Tell me everything truthfully.' O king! Having been thus addressed, Sudeva, supreme among brahmanas, sat down in comfort and recounted the true story about Damayanti."'

363(66)

'"Sudeva said, 'The king of Vidarbha has dharma in his soul. His name is Bhima and his valour is terrible. This is his fortunate daughter, famous by the name of Damayanti. The king of the nishadhas has the name of Nala and he is the son of Virasena. This fortunate one is the wife of the wise Punyashloka. In a game of dice, that lord of the earth was robbed of his kingdom by his brother. He went away with Damayanti, without anyone knowing where they had gone. We have been travelling the entire earth in search of Damayanti. I finally discovered the lady in your son's house. No other woman is known to have a beauty like hers. Between the eyebrows of this dark one there is a natural mark.[170] It is shaped like a lotus and I have seen it before. But it has disappeared now.

It is covered in dirt, like the moon covered by white clouds. This mark of prosperity was given to her by the creator. It can be faintly seen now, like the covered sliver of a moon on the first day of the lunar fortnight. But though her body is covered with dirt, her beauty has not been destroyed. Though she has not washed herself, it shines forth like gold. This lady, this goddess, was identified by me from her body and from that mark, like a hidden fire can be detected from its heat.'"

'Brihadashva said, "O lord of the earth! When Sunanda heard these words of Sudeva, she cleaned the dirt that covered the mark. Having been cleansed of the dirt, Damayanti's mark became visible, like the moon appears in the clear sky. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the mark, Sunanda and the king's mother wept. They embraced her and stood there for some time. Shedding tears, the king's mother said in a soft voice, 'From this mark I know that you are my sister's daughter. O beautiful one! Your mother and I are the daughters of the great-souled Sudamna, the king of Dasharna. She was given to King Bhima and I was again given to Virabahu. I saw you being born, in my father's house in Dasharna. O beautiful one! This house of mine is like your father's house. O Damayanti! All my riches are like yours.' O lord of the earth! On hearing these words, Damayanti's mind rejoiced. She showed her respects to her mother's sister and spoke these words, 'Even though I was unknown, I lived here happily. I received all the objects of my desire and was always protected by you. There is no doubt that my stay here will now be happier still. O mother! But I have been away from home for a long time. Please give me permission to leave. My children have been taken there and the young ones are living there. They must be sorrowful because they are without their father and without me. How are they? I wish to go to Vidarbha. If you wish to do something that brings me pleasure, please give instructions that transport arrangements are made swiftly.' O king! On hearing these words, her mother's sister happily agreed. With her son's consent, the king's mother arranged for a handsome vehicle for her, carried by men.[171] It was guarded by a large force. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was stocked with plenty of food, drink and garments.

'"Then, after a short while, the beautiful one arrived in Vidarbha and all her relatives happily welcomed her, showing her homage. She saw that her relatives and her children were well, and so were her mother, her father and all her friends. O lord of the earth! The famous one, the fortunate Damayanti, worshipped the gods and the brahmanas in accordance with the best of rites. The king was delighted on seeing his daughter. He satisfied Sudeva by giving him a thousand cows, a lot of riches and a village. O king! The beautiful lady spent the night in her father's house. When she had rested, she spoke to her mother in these words."'

364(67)

'"Damayanti said, 'O mother! I tell you truthfully. If you wish to see me alive, please

arrange it so that Nala, the brave one among men, is brought here."

'Brihadashva said, "Thus addressed by Damayanti, the queen was extremely distressed. O king! Her voice choking with tears, there was no reply that she could give. On seeing her in this state, everyone in the inner quarters began to weep and lament grievously. O great king! Then Bhima's wife spoke to him. 'Your daughter Damayanti is sorrowing on account of her husband. O king! Unrestrained by shame, she herself told me this. Ask your messengers to make efforts to find Punyashloka.' Thus asked by her, the king sent brahmanas who were in his service in every direction, with instructions that they should try to find Nala. Thus instructed by the king of Vidarbha, the bulls among the brahmanas came and told Damayanti that they were leaving. Bhima's daughter then told them that in every country and at every place where men gathered, they should repeatedly utter the following words. 'O gambler! O loved one! You are the one who sliced off half my garment. Where are you? You abandoned your beloved wife in a deserted region. It is in accordance with your instructions that she is still awaiting you, clad only in half a garment. The lady is tormented by grief. O lord of the earth! She repeatedly weeps because of that sorrow. O brave one! Show her your favour and reply to her words.' She told them that, as a mark of favour towards her, these were the words that they should utter, because a fire that has the wind with it burns down the forest. They should also say, 'The husband is always bound to protect and maintain his wife. You are learned in dharma. Why do you ignore these duties? You are famous, wise and kind and have been born to a noble lineage. But I fear that you have now become cruel and that is the reason my fortune has turned. O bull among men! O great archer! Show compassion towards me. You have often told me that compassion is the supreme dharma.' She told them that if anyone responded to these words, they should find out everything about that man and where he lived. 'O supreme among brahmanas! If any man replies to your words, convey those words immediately to me. After accomplishing your task, you must return here immediately, so that he does not find out that you are there on Bhima's instructions. Whether he is rich or poor, or desirous of riches, you must find out what it is that he desires.' O king! Having heard these words, the brahmanas went out in all the directions.

'"They searched for the sinner Nala. They went to cities, countries, villages, places where there were cowherds and hermitages. O lord of the earth! Everywhere, the brahmanas repeated exactly the words Damayanti had asked them to utter."'

365(68)

'Brihadashva said, "After a long time, a brahmana by the name of Parnada returned to the city and told Bhima's daughter, 'O Damayanti! I searched for Nishadha day and night and went to the city of Ayodhya. I presented myself before Bhangasvari.[172] O beautiful one! In a public place, I repeated those words before the immensely fortunate

Rituparna, exactly as you had asked me to. On hearing those words, Rituparna, lord of men, did not reply. Nor did any of his courtiers respond, though those words were repeated by me several times. Then the king gave me permission to leave. A man named Bahuka is in Rituparna's service. He is the king's charioteer and is deformed and has short arms. He is skilled in driving vehicles swiftly and he is accomplished in cooking. When I was alone, he spoke a few words to me. He sighed several times and wept repeatedly. He asked me about my welfare and then addressed me in these words, "Though they confront great calamity, women of a good lineage protect themselves through their own efforts and there is no doubt that they win heaven for themselves. Even if they are abandoned by their husbands, they are never angry. He was trying to sustain his life and a bird stole his garment. He is tormented by anguish and a dark one should not be angry. Whether she is treated well or whether she is treated badly, when she sees her husband without his kingdom and without prosperity, a dark one should not be angry." On hearing these words of his, I instantly returned here. Having heard this, you decide and inform the king.' O lord of the earth! Damayanti listened to Parnada's words with tears in her eyes.

'"She went to her mother and secretly told her, 'O mother! Bhima should under no circumstances get to know about these words. In your presence, I wish to employ Sudeva, supreme among brahmanas. King Bhima should not know what my intentions are. If you wish to bring about my pleasure, you must act in this way. Let Sudeva go quickly. Let him perform the auspicious ceremonies that united me with my relatives. Let Sudeva go without delay. O mother! Let him go to the city of Ayodhya and bring Nala back here.' Later, after Parnada, supreme among brahmanas, had rested, the beautiful daughter of Vidarbha worshipped him and gave him a lot of riches. She said, 'O brahmana! When Nala comes here, I will give you even greater riches. O supreme among brahmanas! You have done so much for me. No one else will ever be able to accomplish more. It is because of this that I will soon be reunited with my husband.' Thus addressed by her, the high-minded one paid her his respects and pronounced auspicious blessings over her. Having accomplished his purpose, he returned home.

'"O Yudhishthira! Then Damayanti summoned that brahmana[173] again. In her mother's presence and engulfed by misery and sorrow, she told him, 'O Sudeva! Go to King Rituparna who lives in the city of Ayodhya and tell him, "Bhima's daughter Damayanti wishes for a husband again and will again hold a svayamvara. All the kings and the princes are going there. Having computed the time, this will be held tomorrow. O destroyer of enemies! If it is possible, go there quickly. She will choose a second husband at the time of sunrise, because it is not known whether the valiant Nala is dead or alive."' O great king! As he had been instructed, the brahmana Sudeva then went to King Rituparna and told him what he had been asked to."'

'Brihadashva said, "Having heard these words of Sudeva, Rituparna, lord of men, spoke these words to Bahuka, in a comforting and soft voice, 'O Bahuka! I wish to go to Vidarbha for Damayanti's svayamvara. You are skilled with horses. Do you think that it can be done in a single day?' O Kounteya! Having heard these words from the king, Nala's mind was rent asunder with grief and the great-minded one was tormented with sorrow. He thought, 'If Damayanti has decided to do something like this, she must be demented with grief. Or is it that she has thought of a great means for my sake? Why has the ascetic daughter of Vidarbha decided to perform this cruel act? I am mean and deceitful and my intelligence has been deluded by sin. In this world, feminine nature is fickle. My sin was also terrible. So must it then be. But will she act in this way and forget all her love? That slender-waisted one is anxious for my sake and is despairing. But she can never act in this way, especially because she has children. It is certain that we have to go there and truly find out what is happening. I will accomplish Rituparna's desires, because that is what I want too.' Bahuka decided this in his mind. In a dejected state of mind, he went to King Rituparna. He joined his hands in salutation and said, 'O tiger among men! O lord of men! I give you my word that we will reach the city of Vidarbha in a single day.' O king! Having obtained King Bhangasvari's orders, Bahuka went to the stables and inspected the horses.

'"Bahuka was repeatedly rushed by Rituparna. He then selected horses that were lean, but capable on the road. They were energetic and strong. They had been born in a noble lineage and were good in conduct. They were bereft of all inauspicious marks. Their nostrils were wide and their jaws were big. They were pure and possessed the ten locks of hair.[174] They were from the region of the Sindhu and were as swift as the wind. On seeing them, the king was a little angry and said, 'What do you wish to do? You should not jest with me. How can these horses of mine, weak and lifeless, bear us? How can we travel such a long distance with these steeds?' Bahuka replied, 'There is no doubt that these horses will reach Vidarbha. O king! But if you so desire, tell me which ones you would like me to yoke.' Rituparna said, 'O Bahuka! You are the one who has knowledge of horses. You are the skilled one. Yoke the ones that you think will be swift and capable.' Then the skilled Nala yoked four horses to the chariot. They were bred from a noble lineage and were of good conduct. Then the king swiftly ascended the chariot that had been yoked, as the supreme horses knelt down on the ground.

'"O lord of the earth! Then the handsome King Nala, supreme among men, comforted the horses, which were endowed with energy and strength. Nala controlled the reins and made suta Varshneya ascend the chariot. Then those supreme horses were commanded by Bahuka in accordance with the rules. The chariot seemed to rise up into the sky, confounding the occupants. The wise king of Ayodhya was extremely surprised when he saw those horses carry them with the speed of the wind. Having heard the roar of the

chariot and the control over the horses, Varshneya began to wonder about Bahuka's mastery over horses, 'Is this Matali, the charioteer of the king of the gods? Those great signs can be seen in the brave Bahuka. Or is this Shalihotra,[175] who knows about the breeding of horses? Has he now assumed this beautiful human form?[176] Or might it be King Nala, the destroyer of enemy cities? Has that king come here?'[177] He began to think in this way, 'Or perhaps Bahuka knows some of the knowledge that Nala possessed. The skills of Bahuka and Nala seem to be the same. Then again, his age seems to be the same as Nala's. This is not the immensely valorous Nala, but he has the same knowledge. Sometimes, great-souled ones roam the world in disguise, driven by destiny, or malformed because of what has been said in the sacred texts. My mind is divided because of the deformity of his body. But it is my view that I should not decide in the absence of proof. They are equal in age. It is the form alone that is the difficulty. But then again, Bahuka has all the qualities and I think that he is Nala.' O great king! Punyashloka's old charioteer kept on thinking in his mind. O Indra among kings! Together with the charioteer Varshneya, King Rituparna also kept thinking about Bahuka's expertise with horses. He was extremely delighted on witnessing his strength, valour, enthusiasm, control over horses and diligence."'

367(70)

'Brihadashva said, "Like a bird travelling in the sky, he swiftly crossed rivers, mountains, forests and lakes. As the chariot travelled, King Bhangasvari, the conqueror of enemy cities, saw that his upper garment had fallen down. When he saw that the garment had dropped as they were speeding, the great-souled king told Nala, 'I will go and get it. O immensely intelligent one! Restrain these immensely swift horses. Varshneya can then go and retrieve the garment.' Nala replied, 'Your garment fell down far behind. We have travelled more than a yojana since then. It is not possible to get it back now.' O king! While he was thus addressed by Nala, King Bhangasvari came to a forest where there was a vibhitaka tree laden with fruit.

'"On seeing the tree, the king immediately told Bahuka, 'O suta! Now witness my great prowess at counting. Everyone does not know everything. Indeed, there is no one who knows everything. O Bahuka! In this tree, the number of leaves and fruits that are still on it is more than those that have fallen down by one hundred and one. O Bahuka! There is one more leaf and one hundred fruit. Those two branches have five crore leaves. Take those two branches and their twigs. The fruits there will number two thousand and ninety-five.' At that, Bahuka descended from the chariot and told the king, 'O king! O oppressor of enemies! You have stated something that is beyond my perception. O king! If I count, nothing will be left to supposition. O great king! Witness as I count the number of vibhitakas. I do not know whether your statement is right or wrong. O lord of men! You will see as I count the number of fruit. Let Varshneya handle

the reins of the horses for the moment.' The king told the suta,[178] 'We do not have any time to delay.' However, Bahuka told him with great humility, 'Wait for only an instant. Or if you wish to hurry, take Varshneya as your charioteer. From here onwards, the road is smooth.' O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Rituparana comforted him and said, 'O Bahuka! There is no one on earth who is your equal as a charioteer. You know about horses. I desired to go to Vidarbha with your help. I seek a favour with you. Please do not create obstacles. O Bahuka! I will do whatever you wish, and whatever you tell me, if you take me to Vidarbha today and show me the sunrise there.' At that, Bahuka told him, 'I will count the vibhitakas and then go to Vidarbha. Please do what I ask you to.' Unwillingly, the king asked him to proceed with the counting. He dismounted from the chariot and swiftly cut down the tree. He was extremely surprised that, on counting, the number of fruits was exactly what the king had told him it would be. He said, 'O king! This is extraordinary and I have seen your powers. O king! I wish to know the learning through which you have known this.' But the king was in a hurry to leave and replied, 'Know that I am versed with the heart of the dice and have expertise in counting.' Bahuka said, 'O bull among men! Give me that knowledge. And take from me the knowledge about handling horses.' King Rituparna desired to imbibe the knowledge about horses and there was also the urgency of his task.[179] So he told Bahuka, 'Let it be that way. Accept from me the supreme knowledge about the heart of the dice. O Bahuka! But let my knowledge about horses remain in your heart as a trust.' Having said this, Rituparna gave his knowledge to Nala.

'"When Nala had learned the knowledge of the dice, Kali emerged from his body, continuously vomiting from his mouth Karkotaka's virulent venom. The fire of Kali's curse, which had made the king thin and had oppressed him for a long time, making him lose control over his own self, also issued out. Kali's self was freed from the poison and he assumed his own form. Nala, lord of the nishadhas, was angry and wished to curse him. Kali was frightened. He trembled and joined his hands in salutation. He said, 'O king! Control your anger. I will give you supreme fame. In anger, Indrasena's mother[180] had cursed me earlier, when you had abandoned her and I have been sorely oppressed since then. O Indra among kings! O invincible one! I have lived inside you in great misery. I have burnt day and night from the venom of the king of the serpents. If anyone from the world of men recounts your deeds incessantly, he shall have no reason to be scared of danger from me.' On hearing these words, King Nala controlled the wrath in his soul. Then the frightened Kali quickly entered the vibhitaka. When Kali had been conversing with Nishadha, he had been invisible to others.

'"King Nishadha, the destroyer of enemy warriors, was cured of his fever. Kali had been destroyed and the king had counted the number of fruit. He was extremely delighted and was again endowed with his earlier radiance. Then the energetic one ascended the chariot and drove the swift steeds. Having been possessed by Kali, the

vibhitaka has come to acquire a bad reputation. Nala's heart was delighted. He repeatedly urged those supreme horses and they travelled like birds. The great-minded king proceeded in the direction of Vidarbha. When Nala had gone a long distance, Kali also returned home. O lord of the earth! King Nala was freed from his fever. O king! But though he was free of Kali, he was still separated from his old form."'

368(71)

'Brihadashva said, "Rituparna, for whom truth was his strength, arrived in Vidarbha in the evening. The people informed King Bhima about his arrival. On Bhima's words, the king entered the city of Kundina,[181] filling all the ten directions with the sound of his chariot. Nala's horses[182] heard the roar of the chariot and hearing this, rejoiced, just as they had in Nala's company earlier. Damayanti also heard the roar of Nala's chariot, which was like the deep rumbling of clouds at the onset of the monsoon. Like the horses, Bhima's daughter thought that the chariot roared as it used to before, when Nala used to control his horses. The peacocks in the palace, the elephants in the stables and the horses heard the roar of the great king's chariot. O king! On hearing the roar of the chariot, the peacocks and the elephants made expectant noises, because they thought the rains were imminent.

'"Damayanti said, 'The roar of the chariot fills up the entire earth and gladdens my heart. It must be King Nala. Today, if I do not see the valorous Nala, whose face is like the moon and who possesses innumerable qualities, there is no doubt that I will perish. If I am not engulfed today in the arms of that brave one, whose touch brings pleasure, there is no doubt that I will perish. If Nishadha does not come to me today, with a voice like the roar of the clouds and with a complexion of gold, there is no doubt that I will perish. If that Indra among kings, whose valour is like a lion and who can restrain a mad elephant, does not come to me, there is no doubt that I will perish. I do not remember the slightest falsehood. I do not remember the slightest injury in him. The great-souled keeps all his promises, made even in jest. My lord is forgiving, brave, gentle and generous and is in control of his senses. He is not addicted to low vices. Nishadha has always behaved towards me like an impotent one.[183] Remembering his qualities, I am tormented day and night. My heart is about to be rent asunder because of the sorrow of being separated from that beloved one.'"

'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lamenting in this way and desiring to see Punyashloka, she ascended that large palace, as if bereft of her senses. She saw the chariot in the centre,[184] with King Rituparna, Varshneya and Bahuka on it. Then Varshneya and Bahuka dismounted from the supreme chariot. They unharnessed the horses and secured the chariot. O great king! King Rituparna alighted from the chariot and presented himself before Bhima, whose valour was terrible. Then Bhima

welcomed him with the best of honours. He had suddenly come. The counsel of the women was not known.[185] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! 'You are welcome. What can I do?' asked the king. He did not know that the king had come for the sake of his daughter. The wise King Rituparna, whose truth was his valour, saw that there was no other king or prince there. There were no signs of a svayamvara, nor had an assembling of brahmanas occurred. Then the king, the lord of Koshala, thought about this in his mind and said, 'I have come here to pay my respects.' King Bhima began to reflect about this in his mind. There had to be some other reason for travelling more than a hundred yojanas, passing through many villages. The reason for his arrival had not been correctly stated. The minor reason identified could not have been the reason for his arrival. But the king showed him all due respect and repeatedly told him that he was tired and should rest. Thus treated with friendly homage, the king was pleased. He happily followed the king's servants and went to the house that had been identified for him. O king! When King Rituparna had left with Varshneya, Bahuka grasped the chariot and went to the place where chariots were kept. He freed the horses and tended to them, as instructed in the sacred texts. Having comforted the horses himself, he sat down on a side of the chariot.

'"The sorrowful Damayanti had seen King Bhangasvari, Varshneya the son of a suta and Bahuka, in that position. Vidarbha's daughter began to think. Whose chariot roared in that way? The great sound was like Nala's, but Nishadha was not to be seen. Was it possible that Varshneya had acquired the knowledge? Was that the reason why the roar of the chariot made a great sound like that of Nala's? Or was it the case that Rituparna was the equal of King Nala? The roar of the chariot seemed to be like that of Nishadha's. O lord of the earth! Damayanti debated in this way. O king! She then sent a lady messenger in search of Nishadha."'

369(72)

'"Damayanti said, 'O Keshini! Go and find out who the driver of that chariot is. He is seated by the side of the chariot. He is malformed and has short arms. O fortunate one! Approach him and gently ask his about his welfare. O unblemished one! Ask and find out everything about this man. I have great anxiety that this is King Nala, because my mind is satisfied and my heart is calm. O one with the beautiful waist! In the course of the conversation, use Parnada's words. O unblemished one! Pay attention to his reply.'"

'Brihadashva said, "Then that female messenger carefully went to Bahuka, while the fortunate Damayanti looked on from the palace. Keshini said, 'O Indra among men! Welcome. I wish you all welfare. Damayanti has asked a question. O bull among men! Listen to it attentively. When did you leave? Why have you come here? Tell me everything truthfully. The daughter of Vidarbha wishes to know.' Bahuka replied, 'The famous king of Koshala heard that Damayanti will hold a second svayamvara tomorrow.

O beautiful one! On hearing this, the king set out with excellent steeds that are as swift as the wind and are capable of travelling a hundred yojanas. I am his charioteer.' Keshini asked, 'Who is the third man in your group? Whose is he and where has he come from? Why did this task have to be performed by you?' Bahuka replied, 'He was the charioteer of Punyashloka and is famous by the name of Varshneya. O beautiful one! When Nala fled, he went to Bhangasvari. I am skilled in handling horses and am an expert cook. Rituparna appointed me as his charioteer and his cook.' Keshini asked, 'Does Varshneya know where King Nala has gone? O Bahuka! Has he said anything in your presence?' Bahuka replied, 'Having brought the children of the evil-acting Nala here, he went away where he desired and has no knowledge of Nishadha. O famous one! There is no other man who knows anything about Nala. The lord of the earth roams the world in disguise, in a different form. Nala alone knows where he is, and the lady who is like his second self. Nala never reveals his signs in any way.'

'"Keshini said, 'The brahmana who earlier went to Ayodhya repeatedly uttered the words spoken by a lady "O gambler! O loved one! You are the one who sliced off half my garment. Where are you? You abandoned your beloved wife in a deserted region. It is in accordance with your instructions that she is still awaiting you, clad only in half a garment. The lady is tormented by grief. O lord of the earth! She repeatedly weeps because of that sorrow. O brave one! Show her your favour and reply to her words." O immensely intelligent one! Speak and recount her beloved tale. The unblemished daughter of Vidarbha wishes to hear those words. Ever since she heard the reply you gave to the brahmana then, Vidarbha's daughter has been desirous of hearing the words you uttered again.' O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When Keshini said this to Nala, his heart suffered and his eyes were filled with tears. Having suppressed his grief, the tormented lord of the earth again spoke those words in a voice that was choked with tears, 'Though they confront great calamity, women of a good lineage protect themselves through their own efforts and there is no doubt that they win heaven for themselves. Even if they are abandoned by their husbands, they are never angry. Faithful women sustain their lives with their armour as character. He was trying to sustain his life and a bird stole his garment. He is tormented by anguish and a dark one should not be angry. Whether she is treated well or whether she is treated badly, she sees her husband without his kingdom and without prosperity, hungry and addicted to vice.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As he spoke these words, Nala was extremely miserable. He could not restrain his tears and began to weep. Then Keshini went away and told Damayanti everything that he had said, including the transformation that had come over him."'

370(73)

'Brihadashva said, "Having heard all this, Damayanti was overcome with grief. She

suspected that he was Nala and told Keshini, 'O Keshini! Go and examine Bahuka in many ways. Do not say anything. But stay near him and observe his conduct. O beautiful one! Whenever he does something, find out the reason. In particular, notice if he does anything attentively. O beautiful one! If fire is to be given to him, place an obstruction. If he asks for water, be in no hurry to give it to him. Observe everything about his conduct and come and tell me. Report to me everything about whatever else you happen to see.' Thus addressed by Damayanti, Keshini left quickly. She determined that he had the marks of someone who was skilled in horses and returned. She told Damayanti everything that she had observed, everything about Bahuka, human and divine.

'"Keshini said, 'O Damayanti! Never before have I seen, or heard of, a man with conduct like this. He is firm and pure in his conduct. When he comes to a short passage, he never lowers his head. But on seeing him, the passage is elevated, and he comfortably passes through. Thus a narrow opening becomes a wide opening for him. The king sent a lot of many kinds of food for Rituparna and there was the flesh of many animals. A vessel had been provided for cleaning the meat. When Bahuka looked at the vessel, it filled up with water for cleaning. He then wished to cook and grasped a handful of straw. He made it into kindling and held it up and suddenly, it blazed up in flames. On witnessing that extraordinary sight, I was astounded and came back here. I also saw another great marvel there. O beautiful one! Though he touched fire, it did not burn him down. The water flowed rapidly on his instructions. I witnessed yet another great wonder. He took some flowers in his hand and pressed them gently. When these flowers were pressed in his hands, they became even more fresh and fragrant. Having witnessed these extraordinary wonders, I have swiftly come back here.' Having heard about the deeds performed by Punyashloka, Damayanti decided that Nala was known through his acts and signs and had been regained.

'"She guessed that her husband Nala had assumed the form of Bahuka. She wept and again told Keshini in a soft voice, 'O beautiful one! Go yet again. When Bahuka is inattentive, take from the kitchen some meat that he has cooked and come back here.' The one who performed desired actions went swiftly. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When Bahuka's attention was elsewhere, Keshini took some warm meat and instantly brought it to Damayanti. In earlier times, she had often tasted meat prepared by Nala. On tasting it, she knew Nala to be the cook. She wept in great sorrow, overcome by grief. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She then washed her face and sent Keshini with the twins. Bahuka recognized Indrasena[186] and her brother. The king rushed to them, embraced them and placed them on his lap. Having regained his children, who were like divine children, Bahuka was overcome by great grief and cried loudly. Thus, Nishadha repeatedly displayed his mental anguish. Suddenly, he let his children go and told Keshini, 'O beautiful one! These twins are just like my own children and on

suddenly seeing them, I began to shed tears. You have been coming here quite often and people may interpret these signs wrongly. We are guests in your country. O beautiful one! Therefore, I bow down before you. Go away.’”’

371(74)

‘Brihadashva said, “Having seen all the agitations of the wise Punyashloka, Keshini quickly returned and reported it to Damayanti. Damayanti was sad and anxious because of the suspicion that this was Nala. She sent Keshini again to her mother,[187] ‘Suspecting him to be Nala, I have examined Bahuka in many ways. But I have doubts on account of his appearance. I wish to know this for myself. O mother! Let him come to me, or let me go to him, with or without my father’s knowledge.’ Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, the queen related this to Bhima and the king got to know about his daughter’s plan. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With the sanction of her father and mother, she had Nala brought to where she was staying.

‘“On suddenly seeing King Nala, the beautiful one was overcome with a terrible sorrow. O great king! She was dressed in a red garment. Her hair was matted, dirty and caked with mud. Damayanti spoke these words to Bahuka, ‘O Bahuka! Have you ever seen any man, who is said to know about dharma, abandon his sleeping wife in a deserted forest? Who will forsake his beloved and innocent wife, when she is overcome by fatigue? Who but Punyashloka Nala will leave? What offence have I committed towards that lord of the earth? When I was overcome with sleep, why did he desert me in the wilderness and go away? In earlier times, I had chosen him myself, in the presence of the gods. She loved him and was devoted to him. She was the mother of his children. How could he forsake her? He had accepted my hand in front of the fire, following the words of the swans. He had promised to sustain me. Where has that pledge gone now?’ O destroyer of enemies! When Damayanti was saying all this, tears of sorrow welled up in her eyes and flowed copiously. When Nala saw those tears of sorrow flow copiously from the black-pupiled and red-tinged eyes, he replied in words of sorrow, ‘O timid one! The loss of my kingdom was not brought about by me. It was brought about by Kali and he made me abandon you. O you who are best in the observance of dharma! In earlier times, when you were living in the forest and were miserable and sorrowful at my having lost my garment, you had cursed him. Ever since then, tormented by the curse, Kali has resided in my body. Burnt with that curse, he has been like kindling with fire in it. Now he has been conquered with my perseverance and austerities. O beautiful one! There will be an end to our miseries. Freeing me, that evil one has gone away. O one with the wide hips! It is because of this that I came here, for your sake and for no other reason. O timid one! But how could a woman like you abandon a husband who loved her and was devoted to her? How could you marry another? On the king’s instructions, messengers have travelled all over the earth,

proclaiming that Bhima's daughter will choose a second husband. Like a wanton one, and acting on her own desires, she will choose one who is her equal. On hearing this, Bhangasvari came here swiftly.' When she heard Nala's lament, Damayanti trembled and was frightened. She joined her hands in salutation and spoke these words."'

372(75)

'"Damayanti said, 'O ruler of Nishadha! O fortunate one! It does not behove you to be suspicious of sin or find fault with me. I rejected the gods and chose you. It was in order to bring you here that the brahmanas had gone in all the directions, singing my words in verses in the ten directions. O king! At last, a learned brahmana named Parnada discovered you in Koshala, in Rituparna's house. When I heard his words and the exact reply that you gave, I saw this means of bringing Nishadha here. O lord of the earth! O lord of men! Other than you, who in this world is capable of driving horses over more than a hundred yojanas in a single day? O lord of the earth! I touch your feet in worship and swear that I have not been unfaithful towards you, not even in my thoughts. If I have committed any sin, let the moving wind that courses through the world and is a witness to everything free me from my breath of life today. If I have committed any sin, let the sun which always travels the world with its sharp rays free me from my breath of life today. If I have committed any sin, let the moon which courses through all beings as a witness free me from my breath of life today. Let these three gods who hold up the three worlds relate the truth of exactly what has happened. Or let them abandon me today.'"

'Brihadashva said, "Thus addressed, the wind-god spoke from the sky and said, 'O Nala! I tell you the truth that she has not committed any sin. O king! Damayanti has protected her treasure of good conduct and has increased it. We have protected her for three years and are witness. This method that she has devised for your sake is unparalleled. But for you, there is no other man who can travel one hundred yojanas in a single day. O lord of the earth! Bhima's daughter has obtained you and you have obtained Bhima's daughter. Do not have any doubts about what you should do. Be united with your wife.' While the wind-god was speaking, a shower of flowers fell from above. The drums of the gods sounded and a pure breeze began to blow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing this marvel, King Nala, the destroyer of enemies, gave up all his doubts about Damayanti.

'"Then the lord of the earth donned the garment that does not decay and recalled to his mind the king of the serpents. He regained his old form. When Bhima's daughter saw her husband in his own form, the unblemished one embraced Punyashloka and cried loudly. Radiant as before, King Nala also embraced Bhima's daughter. He also embraced his children in the proper way and was delighted. The one with the beautiful face and the large eyes placed her head on his chest. Overcome with sorrow, she sighed heavily.

The sweet-smiling one's limbs were covered with dirt and tears flowed down. She embraced that tiger among men for a long time.

'"O king! Then the mother of the daughter of Vidarbha happily informed Bhima about everything that had transpired between Nala and Damayanti. The great king replied, 'I will see Nala and Damayanti tomorrow, after he has rested and performed his ablutions.' O king! Then the happy couple conversed throughout the night about their earlier wanderings in the forest. They slept happily. He was united with his wife in the fourth year. He obtained all the objects of desire, attained all accomplishments and was supremely happy. Damayanti was extremely content at having regained her husband, like the earth with half-grown crops is, on receiving showers. She was united with her husband and all her fatigue had passed. Her fever was gone and her heart was filled with joy. All the desires of Bhima's daughter were met and she was as radiant as the night, when the moon had arisen."'

373(76)

'Brihadashva said, "After the night had passed, King Nala adorned himself in ornaments. With Vidarbha's daughter by his side, he went and met the king at the right time. Then Nala paid his respects to his father-in-law. Then the beautiful Damayanti also offered her respects to her father. Extremely delighted, Bhima welcomed him like a son. The lord also showed him due homage and comforted Nala, together with his devoted wife Damayanti. Thus honoured, King Nala also returned the honour in the proper way and offered his services to him.[188] A great roar of joy arose in the city. The people were delighted to see Nala return in this way. The city was decorated with flags, flagstaffs and garlands. The streets were watered and the royal roads cleaned and adorned with flowers. At every door, the citizens placed flowers that had been cut. The gods were worshipped in all the temples.

'"When King Rituparna heard that Bahuka was Nala and that he had been reunited with Damayanti, he was delighted. King Nala had him brought and begged forgiveness of the king. He who was intelligent begged forgiveness because of several reasons. Thus honoured, the surprised king spoke to Nishadha, 'I congratulate you that you have been happily reunited with your wife. O Nishadha! O lord of Nishadha! If I committed any crime when you lived in disguise in my house, if I committed an offence, knowingly or unknowingly, please pardon me.' Nala replied, 'O king! You have not committed the slightest crime. Even if you had, I would not have been angered and would have forgiven you. O lord of men! You have always been my friend and my relative. I have lived happily in your house and you have always provided me with every object of desire, more in your house than in my own. O king! Please exhibit your friendship in future too. Your knowledge about horses vests with me.[189] O king! If you so wish, I will happily impart it to you now.' Having said this, Nishadha gave that knowledge to

Rituparna. Having performed the prescribed deeds, he accepted it. When King Bhangasvari had obtained the knowledge about horses, he appointed another charioteer and left for his own city.[190] O lord of the earth! After Rituparna had left, King Nala did not reside in the city of Kundina for a long time."'

374(77)

'Brihadashva said, "O Kounteya! Nishadha lived there for a month. Then, with Bhima's permission, he left for Nishadha with a small number of attendants. He left with a single radiant chariot, sixteen tusked elephants, fifty horses and six hundred infantry. The earth trembled when the lord of the earth travelled speedily. Then the great-minded one entered, swiftly and wrathfully.

'"Virasena's son, Nala, went before Pushkara and said, 'O Pushkara! Let us play with dice again. I have acquired a lot of riches. Damayanti, and everything else that I have acquired, will be my stake. The kingdom will be yours. It is my certain resolution that the game of dice must occur again. O fortunate one! Let there be a single stake. Let us offer our lives as stakes. When the other's possessions, kingdom and riches, have been won, it has been said that it is supreme dharma to have a counter-stake as the last one. If you do not wish to have a duel with dice, let there be a duel with chariots. O king! Let either you or I find peace. The aged have laid down the ordinance that an ancestral kingdom must be obtained back, through whatever means. O Pushkara! Choose one or the other, according to your intelligence. Choose the game of dice, or bend your bow in battle.' Having been thus addressed by Nishadha, Pushkara began to laugh. He was certain in his mind that he was going to win and replied to the lord of the earth, 'O Nishadha! It is your good fortune that you have obtained riches for a counter-stake. It is your good fortune that Damayanti's difficult times have now come to an end. O king! O uprooter of your enemies! It is your good fortune that you are still alive with your wife. I will win Vidarbha's daughter, with all her ornaments and all these riches. She will then serve me, the way an apsara serves Shakra in heaven. O Nishadha! I have always remembered you and have been waiting for your return. I find no pleasure in gambling with those who are not my well-wishers. Having won the beautifully-hipped and unblemished Damayanti today, I will have accomplished my objective. She has always been in my heart.' Having heard the words of the mad and insolent one, Nala was angered and desired to slice off his head with his sword.

'"But though his eyes were copper-red with anger, the king smiled and said, 'Let us stake. Why do you talk? Talk after you have won.' Then the gamble between Pushkara and Nala commenced. O fortunate one! With a single stake, he was defeated by Nala. Thus, in the stake, he lost his entire store of treasures and his life. Having defeated Pushkara, the king laughingly told him, 'This entire kingdom is now mine. All its thorns have been removed. O stupid one! O sinful king! You will not be able to set your eyes

on Vidarbha's daughter. You and your family have been reduced to the state of slaves. That I was earlier defeated by you was not because of your deeds. That deed was done by Kali. But fool that you are, you did not understand this. I will never ascribe to you the offences committed by others. May you live in happiness. I grant you your life. O brave one! Let there be no doubt about my affection for you. The fraternal love I have for you will never decrease. O Pushkara! You are my brother. Live for a hundred years.' Having thus comforted his brother, Nala, for whom truth was his valour, embraced him repeatedly and sent him off to his own city. O king! Having been thus comforted by Nishadha, Pushkara joined his hands in salutation and replied to Punyashloka, 'May your fame be without decay. May you live happily for ten thousand[191] years. O lord of the earth! You have granted me my life and a place to live in.' Thus honoured by the king,[192] the king[193] lived there for a month. O king! Then Pushkara happily left for his own city, surrounded by his relatives, with a large army and accompanied by humble servants. O bull among men! His appearance was like that of the resplendent sun. After having sent Pushkara, the prosperous king, shorn of disease and laden with riches, entered his own city, which had been gorgeously decorated. Having entered, the lord of the Nishadhas comforted the citizens."'

375(78)

'Brihadashva said, "When the happy city had quietened down and a great festival had started, the king sent a large army to bring Damayanti. Damayanti's father Bhima, terrible in valour, the destroyer of enemy heroes and indomitable in his soul, sent her with due honours. After the arrival of Vidarbha's daughter with her children, King Nala spent his days in happiness, like the king of the gods in Nandana. The immensely famous king, having regained his kingdom, began to live there once more and became famous among all the kings of Jambudvipa.[194] As is prescribed, he performed many sacrifices and gave away a lot of dakshina. O Indra among kings! Soon, together with your well-wishers, you will also spend this time. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best of men! Thus did Nala, the destroyer of enemy cities, confront this kind of unhappiness, together with his wife, because of gambling. O lord of the earth! Nala, who was alone, suffered this terrible and great grief. But he regained his prosperity. O Pandava! But you are accompanied by your brothers and Krishna.[195] Thinking about dharma, you are enjoying yourself in this great forest. O king! The immensely fortunate brahmanas, learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, are always with you. Where is the cause for sorrow? It is said that this account brings about the destruction of Kali. O lord of the earth! On hearing it, a person like you is capable of being consoled. Thinking that human prosperity is always transient, you should not sorrow over its coming and going. Those who recount Nala's great tale and those who listen to it often, are never

confronted by calamity. He obtains riches and prosperity flows towards him. He who hears this eternal, supreme and ancient history, obtains sons, grandsons, animals and an exalted position among men. There is no doubt that he is without disease and finds happiness. O king! I will destroy the fear that you see, that you may be challenged again by someone skilled with dice. O king! I know the heart of dice. Truth is your valour and I am pleased with you. O Kounteya! I will tell you. Learn it from me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The king[196] was extremely happy and told Brihadashva, "O illustrious one! I wish to know the secrets about the heart of the dice from you." Then the great-souled one gave the Pandava the secrets of the dice. Having given it, the immensely ascetic one went to Ashvashira[197] to bathe. When Brihadashva had left, he[198] heard from wise ones, brahmanas and ascetics that Savyasachi Partha was engaged in terrible austerities, surviving only on air. Those ones, who were rigid in their vows, had assembled there from large mountains and tirthas. They said, "The mighty-armed Partha is engaged in fearful austerities and so terrible are these austerities that the likes of them have not been witnessed before. Partha Dhananjaya is eternally engaged in the vows of an ascetic. The fortunate one is living alone like a hermit and is like the god Dharma personified." O king! On hearing that his beloved brother Jaya[199] was tormenting himself in the great forest through austerities, Pandava Kounteya suffered on his account. Tormented in his heart, Yudhishthira sought refuge in the great forest and questioned brahmanas who were versed in different kinds of knowledge.'

376(79)

Janamejaya said, 'O illustrious one! When my great-grandfather Partha left Kamyaka forest, what did the Pandavas[200] do without Savyasachi? It seems to me that the great archer, the vanquisher of enemy armies, was their refuge, like Vishnu is that of the Adityas. Without him, who is the equal of Indra in valour and has never withdrawn from the field of battle, how did my brave grandfathers spend their time in the forest?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O son! When Pandava Savyasachi left Kamyaka forest, the Kouravas were immersed in sorrow and grief. The Pandavas looked like jewels from a string that has been broken or birds whose wings have been clipped. All of them were unhappy. Without the one whose deeds are undecaying, the forest became like Chaitraratha[201] when Kubera is not there. O Janamejaya! In his absence, the Pandavas, tigers among men, lived joylessly in Kamyaka. O best of the Bharata lineage! Those valorous maharathas use pure-tipped arrows to kill many kinds of sacrificial animals for the brahmanas. Those destroyers of enemies, tigers among men, collected forest fare every day, and after having spread it out, offered it to the brahmanas. O king! After Dhananjaya's departure, those bulls among men lived there, unhappy in their minds and anxious about him.

‘In particular, Panchali remembered the husband who was in the middle, the brave one who was absent. She told the foremost of the Pandavas,[202] “In the absence of the two-armed Arjuna, the equal of the many-armed Arjuna[203] and the best of the Pandavas, this forest seems cheerless to me. Wherever I look, the earth seems to be empty to me. This forest, with its many marvels and blossoming trees, no longer seems to be attractive in Savyasachi’s absence. This Kamyaka is as blue as monsoon clouds and is frequented by elephants in rut. But without Pundarikaksha,[204] it has no charm. The twang of his bow is like the roar of the thunder. O king! I remember Savyasachi and without him, I cannot find any peace of mind.” O great king! On hearing this lamentation, Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemy warriors, told Droupadi, “O beautiful one! O slim-waisted one! The words that you speak please the mind and they gladden my heart, like a sip of ambrosia. His arms were long and smooth and thick like clubs. They were round and marked from the string of the bow. With swords, weapons and clubs, with golden rings and arm-guards, they were like five-headed serpents. Without that tiger among men, the forest seems to have lost its sun. Depending on that mighty-armed one, the Panchalas and the Kurus do not fear even the powerful gods in battle. All of us found refuge in the arms of that great-souled one. We considered that we had routed our enemies and had obtained the earth. Without the brave Phalguna, I find no mental peace in Kamyaka. As I look upon this earth, it seems to me to be empty everywhere.” Nakula said, “He went to the northern directions and defeated immensely powerful ones in battle. Vasava’s son[205] obtained hundreds of excellent gandharva horses. O king! They had the colour of partridges and were dappled. They were as fast as the wind. He gave them to his beloved brother at the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice. Without that terrible archer, Bhima’s younger brother, without the one who is an equal of the gods, I no longer wish to live in Kamyaka forest.” Sahadeva said, “He won riches and women in battle. He defeated maharathas. In earlier times, he brought them all to the king at the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice. He is an immensely radiant one who vanquished all the Yadavas in the field of battle. With Vasudeva’s consent, he single-handedly abducted Subhadra. When I see that Jishnu’s seat is empty in our house, there can never be any peace in my heart. O great king! I think we should no longer live in this forest. O destroyer of enemies! Without that brave one, none of us finds this forest to be attractive.”’

The third volume will complete Aranyaka (Vana) Parva, the story of the sojourn in the forest and will cover Sections 33 to 44 of the 100-parva classification. This volume has detailed descriptions of tirthas and recounts the stories of Agastya, Rishyashringa, Kartavirya, Sukanya and Chyavana, Mandhata, Jantu, Shibi, Ashtavakra, Yavakrita, Jatasura, Markandeya and Arjuna's slaying of the Nivatakavacha demons. The Kouravas are defeated by the gandharvas and freed by the Pandavas. Droupadi is abducted by the Kouravas (Jayadratha) and freed. Karna is robbed of his earrings by Indra.

Mahabharata: Volume 3 *will be published in April 2011*.

৯# Acknowledgements

Carving time out from one's regular schedule and work engagements to embark on such a mammoth work of translation has been difficult. The past tense should not be used, since only 20 per cent of the road has yet been traversed. Sometimes, I wish I had been born in nineteenth-century Bengal, with a benefactor funding me for doing nothing but this. But alas, the days of gentlemen of leisure are long over. The time could not be carved out from professional engagements, barring of course assorted television channels, who must have wondered why I have been so reluctant to head for their studios in the evenings. It was ascribed to health, interpreted as adverse health. It was certainly health, but not in an adverse sense. Reading the Mahabharata is good for one's mental health and is an activity to be recommended, without any statutory warnings. The time was stolen in the evenings and over weekends. The cost was therefore borne by one's immediate family, and to a lesser extent by friends. Socializing was reduced, since every dinner meant one less chapter done. The family has first claim on the debt, though I am sure it also has claim on whatever merits are due. At least Suparna does, and these volumes are therefore dedicated to her. I suspect Sirius has no claim on the merits, though he has been remarkably patient at the times when he has been curled up near my feet and I have been translating away. There is some allegory there about a dog keeping company when the Mahabharata is being read and translated.

Most people have thought I was mad, even if they never quite said that. Among those who believed and thought it was worthwhile, beyond immediate family, are M. Veerappa Moily, Ashok Desai, Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Laveesh Bhandari. And my sons, Nihshanka and Vidroha. The various reviewers of the first volume have also been extremely kind. Incidentally, I wouldn't have been able to do it without Vaman Shivram Apte. When he compiled the student's Sanskrit dictionary more than a hundred years ago in Pune, I am certain he had no idea that it would be used so comprehensively to translate the Mahabharata.

Penguin also believed. My initial hesitation about being able to deliver was brushed aside by R. Sivapriya, who pushed me after the series had been commissioned by V. Karthika. And then Sumitra Srinivasan became the editor, followed by Paloma Dutta. The enthusiasm of these ladies was so infectious that everything just snowballed and Paloma ensured that the final product of the second volume was much more readable than what I had initially produced.

When I first embarked on what was also a personal voyage of sorts, the end was never in sight and seemed to stretch to infinity. Now that 20 per cent is over (and 10 per cent more is in the pipeline), the horizon can be seen. And all the people mentioned above have had a role to play in this journey.

[1] Brahmana is a text and also the word used for the highest caste.

[2] A class of religious and philosophical texts that are composed in the forest, or are meant to be studied when one retires to the forest.

[3] The six Vedangas are *shiksha* (articulation and pronunciation), *chhanda* (prosody), *vyakarana* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotisha* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (rituals).

[4] Religion, duty.

[5] Wealth. But in general, any object of the senses.

[6] Desire.

[7] Release from the cycle of rebirth.

[9] Krishna or Krishnaa is another name for Droupadi.

[1] Droupadi.

[2] Depending on the context, dharma is translated as law, virtue or religion. None of these captures the exact nuance of dharma holding things up and dharma has therefore been retained in the translation.

[3] Divine sage.

[4] Narada was Brahma's son, born from Brahma's mind. He was a messenger of the gods, travelling back and forth between the world of men and the world of the gods. He also had a tendency to create dissension and conflict.

[5] *Arghya*, offerings made to those who are revered, including guests.

[6] Sage.

[7] Panchala was Drupada's kingdom.

[8] Demon. Asura or demon is used as the antithesis of *sura* or god.

[9] *Svarga* (heaven), *prithivi* (earth) and *patala* (the nether world).

[10] Actually, the Pandavas haven't been told that Tilottama was an apsara. An *apsara* is a celestial maiden. Apsaras are sometimes described as Indra's servants and sometimes as wives of the *gandharvas*. They are also dancers and a bit like celestial courtesans.

[11] Kunti.

[12] Hiranyakashipu was the son of Kashyapa and Diti and his son was Prahlada. Vishnu killed him in his *narasimha* incarnation.

[13] The daityas are the sons of Diti and were demons. *Danavas* are the sons of Danu and are also demons. Daitya, danava and asura are usually used synonymously, though the etymology is distinct.

[14] Delusion.

[15] Demon.

[16] *Koumuda* is the month of Kartika and koumudi is a festival that is observed on the full moon day in Kartika (sometimes the full moon day in the month of Ashvina), when everything is illuminated.

[17] Magha is one of the twenty-seven lunar mansions or *nakshatra*s, specifically, the tenth. Nakshatra can be translated as star, but not all nakshatras are stars. Sometimes, they are constellations. For instance, Magha is actually a constellation with five stars.

[18] The critical edition has dharma. Some other editions have *varma* or armour, in which case, the army would have been clad in armour. Given the context, varma is more appropriate.

[19] Bards.

[20] Heaven needs explanation, the word used in Sanskrit is *trivishtapa*. More accurately, the word should be translated as Indra's world. There were thirty (or thirty-three) gods. Even more accurately, *trivishtapa* should be translated as the world of the thirty.

[21] Yakshas are a semi-divine species and companions of Kubera, the god of treasure.

[22] Rakshas or rakshasas are demons and evil spirits, but a distinct species from daityas. Rakshas are also guardians or protectors and that sense is more relevant in this context.

[23] Serpants. Throughout the translation, we have used serpents for nagas and snakes for *sarpa*s. Nagas are not quite snakes. They are semi-divine, can assume human forms and live in specific regions. All these traits are uncharacteristic of snakes.

[24] A mleccha is a barbarian, meaning that mlecchas do not speak Sanskrit and are not *arya*s.

[25] Royal sages.

[26] Garuda.

[27] *Siddhi* means accomplishment. Siddhas are semi-divine species who have attained these superhuman accomplishments or faculties.

[28] Rishis who know the nature of the *brahman*, the supreme being.

[29] Literally, great god. Shiva.

[30] The god of fire.

[31] The god of wind.

[32] The moon-god Chandra.

[33] The sun-god Aditya.

[34] Parameshthi is an epithet for various gods—Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and Agni. Since Brahma, Shiva and Agni have been separately mentioned, here it probably means Vishnu.

[35] Budha is someone who is wise, it is also a name for Mercury.

[36] Hermits.

[37] 60,000 sages who were the sizes of thumbs. They preceded the sun's chariot.

[38] This must be a class of sages, but the meaning is unclear. Perhaps it means those who were descended from Marichi, one of Brahma's mental sons, that is, a son born through Brahma's mental powers.

[39] Great sages.

[40] The architect among the gods.

[41] Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

[42] *Tila* means a small particle, while *uttama* means best or excellent. The best of the small bits had been used in creating Tilottama.

[43] Brahma.

[44] Mahadeva or Shiva.

[45] Shiva.

[46] Shiva's.

[47] Bala was a demon and Indra killed him. Thus, Indra is the slayer of Bala.

[48] Brahma.

[49] Semi-divine species, musicians of the gods.

[50] Tall tree.

[51] That is, first in grasping Tilottama's hand.

[52] The word aditya has four different meanings. First, Aditya is the sun-god. Second, all the sons of Aditi are known as adityas. Hence, aditya is a term for gods in general. Third, Aditya is also sometimes used as an epithet for Vishnu. Fourth, there are twelve manifestations of the sun-god, known collectively as adityas. These shine together when the universe is destroyed. In this context, either the fourth or the second meaning is indicated, probably the fourth.

[53] *Brahmacharya* is the first of the four stages *(ashramas*) of life, the other three being *garhasthya* (householder stage), *vanaprastha* (retirement to the forest) and *sannyasa* (renunciation). One who is in the brahmacharya stage is a brahmachari. Brahmacharya is usually translated as celibacy, though anyone who follows the path of the brahman is a brahmachari.

[54] The goddess of learning, also a river.

[55] Sarasvati is often depicted with elephants anointing her.

[56] The Pandavas were also descended from Kuru.

[57] The four pursuits in life are dharma (righteous conduct), artha (riches), *kama* (desire) and *moksha* (salvation).

[58] Arjuna's name.

[59] Arjuna.

[60] Yudhishthira.

[61] One without enemies, Yudhishthira's name.

[62] Arjuna's name. Savyasachi means someone who is left-handed.

[63] Arjuna's name.

[64] The six vedangas are *shiksha* (articulation and pronunciation), *chhanda* (prosody), *vyakarana* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotisha* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (rituals).

[65] Indra.

[66] Gods of the wind.

[67] Sacrifices to Agni. Agnihotra means maintenance of the sacred fire and offering oblations to it.

[68] Coincidentally, Kouravya means a descendant of Kuru, as does Kourava.

[69] Agni.

[70] Kunti's son, that is, Arjuna.

[71] Ananga. Ananga means one without a body and there is a story where the god of love lost his body because he managed to annoy Shiva.

[72] Yudhishthira.

[73] The vajra is Indra's weapon and Arjuna was Indra's son.

[74] Mahadeva is Uma's consort.

[75] A putrika is a daughter who is regarded as a son. After marriage, she lives in her father's household. Her son is regarded as her father's son and becomes the heir.

[76] Place of pilgrimage.

[77] Kubera.

[78] The word used is *lokapala*, which translates as protector or preserver of the worlds. In this context, it might mean either Brahma or Vishnu. There are also eight lokapalas who are regarded as guardians of the eight directions. But that is clearly not meant.

[79] The enemy of Madhu, Krishna's name. Vishnu had killed a demon named Madhu.

[80] Arjuna's name. The name literally means fearsome or terrible.

[81] Krishna.

[82] Ancient sages, whose names invariably occur together. Narayana is also Vishnu's name and *nara* also means man. Narayana is equated with Krishna and Nara with Arjuna.

[83] Krishna's name, since Krishna belonged to the lineage of the Vrishnis.

[84] Krishna's name. Strictly speaking, Vishnu's name.

[85] Musical instrument, lute.

[1] *Hala* means plough and Haladhara is the wielder of the plough, that is, Balarama. Revati is Balarama's wife.

[2] A gandharva is a celestial musician. But here, it probably means musicians in general.

[3] Rukmini was married to Krishna and their son is Pradyumna.

[4] Pritha's son, Arjuna.

[5] Though we have written it as Vasudeva, Krishna is actually Vaasudeva, because he is Vasudeva's son. Bhadra or Subhadra is Vasudeva's daughter and is therefore Vaasudeva Krishna's sister.

[6] Though Krishna and Subhadra had Vasudeva as their common father, their mothers were different. Sarana and Subhadra had the same mother too.

[7] Krishna.

[8] A ceremony where a bride chooses her husband from assembled suitors.

[9] That is, Yudhishthira.

[10] Arjuna.

[11] Yudhishthira's sanction.

[12] The names of the two horses.

[13] Presiding officer for want of a better word. *Sabha* is an assembly hall and the word used in the text is *sabhapala,* meaning controller or presiding officer of the assembly hall.

[14] A maharatha is in general a mighty warrior. More specifically, a maharatha is skilled in the use of all weapons and can take on ten thousand warriors single-handedly.

[15] Jishnu is one of Arjuna's names and means the victorious one.

[16] Vanamali is usually a name for Krishna. But here it means Baladeva or Balarama.

[17] Halayudha is Baladeva's name and means one whose weapon is a plough.

[18] Baladeva's name.

[19] Krishna's name, meaning the one without decay.

[20] Krishna's name.

[21] Krishna's name.

[1] Arjuna's name.

[2] That is, increased the honour.

[3] Partha means Pritha's (Kunti's) son, but is usually used for Arjuna.

[4] Satvata actually means a follower or worshipper of Krishna. Here it means the Yadavas.

[5] Period of exile.

[6] Yudhishthira.

[7] That is, out of jealousy.

[8] Droupadi.

[9] Madhava is one of Krishna's names.

[10] Pundarika is a lotus, usually the white lotus. Pundarikaksha means one with lotus eyes and is Vishnu's name, used here for Krishna.

[11] Balarama.

[12] Nakula and Sahadeva.

[13] Purandara is Indra's name and means the sacker of cities.

[14] A more literal translation is that he smelt Krishna's head. This is a sign of affection displayed towards those who are younger, Krishna being younger than Yudhishthira.

[15] Bhima was also older than Krishna.

[16] This means those who were younger or inferior to Yudhishthira.

[17] Of riches.

[18] Shakra is another name for Indra. Hence, Shakraprastha means Indraprastha.

[19] Jayanta is Indra's son. Indra's wife is Shachi. Since she is Pouloma's daughter, she is also known as Poulomi.

[20] *Abhi* means extreme and *manyu* means anger.

[21] An unrivalled warrior, whose valour is unlimited, greater than a maharatha.

[22] Kind of tree used in sacrifices, said to contain fire in its womb.

[23] In the sense that all the Pandavas were indirectly his fathers.

[24] Arjuna's name, meaning the terrible or fearful one.

[25] Indra.

[26] Daughter of Panchala, Droupadi.

[27] Bhima.

[28] *Prati* means like or resembling.

[29] Soma is the name of a plant and its juice and soma sacrifices are sacrifices at

which soma juice is offered.

[30] He should therefore be thus named, the word *suta* meaning son.

[31] He should therefore be thus named, *shruta* means heard and karma means deed. Kiriti is one of Arjuna's names.

[32] This connection is not clear.

[33] The family priest.

[1] Bhishma. Shantanu was Bhishma's father.

[2] Meaning good deeds.

[3] Yudhishthira.

[4] The king became like a fourth objective to be attained.

[5] *Varnas*.

[6] The goddess of wealth.

[7] Literally, the lord of all beings. But more generally, the lord of creation. Though usually applied to Brahma, the term is also used for Vishnu and for ten lords of the world created by Brahma. In this context, the reference is to Brahma.

[8] Since *pura* means a city, Purandara is the destroyer of cities and is Indra's name.

[9] Descendant of the Vrishni lineage, that is, Krishna.

[10] Arjuna and Krishna respectively.

[11] Though rarely used, Krishna is also one of Arjuna's names.

[12] The twin physicians of the gods.

[13] That is, the morning sun.

[14] Shakra is one of Indra's names.

[15] Prevent them from running away.

[16] Indra's name. Shatakratu means the performer of a hundred sacrifices.

[17] The word used in the text is *pishacha*.

[18] A lokapala is a protector (*pala*) of a loka or a world. The number of lokas is sometimes three, sometimes seven and sometimes fourteen. Here, the reference is to the three worlds of heaven, earth and the nether regions and the waters have been added as a fourth world.

[19] The name of the bow.

[20] Vishnu's weapon, usually translated in English as a discus, though disc is more appropriate. It is a circular weapon, hurled like a missile.

[21] Bhoumana is Vishvakarma's name. Vishvakarma is the architect of the gods. The Sanskrit text of the critical edition actually says Bhouvana, though many regional versions say Bhoumana. Bhoumana and Bhouvana are synonymous.

[22] A vimana is a celestial chariot and those who are virtuous get to ride on vimanas.

[23] Vishnu's club.

[24] The sense is that no hole to escape could be found between the two chariots.

[25] The eight cardinal points, plus above and below.

[26] Indra has one thousand eyes.

[27] Indra. Indra slew a demon named Vritra.

[28] Harivahana is Indra's name, because Hari is the name of Indra's horse. The word *hari* means tawny, so that was probably the horse's colour.

[29] Of chariots.

[30] Indra slew a demon named Namuchi.

[31] The word used is *bhalla*. The word is used for an arrow, as well as for a missile that is like a small spear.

[32] Phalguna or Phalguni is Arjuna's name. He was thus named because he was born when the nakshatra Phalguni was in the ascendant.

[33] Suparna is Garuda's mother.

[34] It isn't clear from the Mahabharata what kind of a weapon a bhushundi was. It was a weapon that was hurled and could have been a simple rock. However, in descriptions of the Kurukshetra War, it seems to have been more sophisticated than a simple rock.

[35] The gods number thirty or thirty-three.

[36] The staff of death.

[37] A shibika is a palanquin, the god of wealth or Kubera's weapon.

[38] Noose.

[39] This seems to be a special kind of chakra, though Shiva's weapon is actually a trident. However, the word Shiva is also used generically for any god.

[40] Herbs.

[41] Bow.

[42] Club.

[43] Spear.

[44] Yama.

[45] Battleaxe.

[46] Mace.

[47] Krishna and Arjuna. *Achyuta* means one who does not decay and is usually used for Krishna.

[48] Paka was a demon killed by Indra.

[49] Literally, those who move about (*chara*) in the night (*nisha*), but the term is also specifically used for goblins, jackals, owls and snakes.

[50] Kinnaras are mythical and semi-divine species, with human bodies and heads of horses. They are the companions of Kubera.

[51] Indra.

[52] A demon killed by Indra.

[53] The *chataka* birds, but also peacocks.

[54] The term for this is *urdhvareta*, meaning those who hold up their semen.

[55] Yama, the god of death.

[56] In this context, this should be interpreted as a period earmarked for studying, rather than lifelong celibacy.

[57] There are several hells (*naraka*). A son is named *putra* because he saves *(trana*) the father from the hell named put. This hell is also called *punnam*, which means, by the name of put.

[58] The former human wife.

[59] The way of the birds.

[60] The sacrificial fire is of three types—*garhapatya* (in the household), *ahavaniya* (used in sacrifices) and *dakshina* (the one placed facing the south).

[61] The number eight has two possible interpretations. The first is the ordinary fire and the other seven consisting of the sacrificial fire in seven different places—the wife's position at the sacrifice, the *soma* altar, the general altar, the seat of the priest who maintains the sacrificial fire, the area reserved for the assisting priests, the place where the rituals are performed and the place where the worship is performed. The second and perhaps more convincing explanation is the ordinary aggregated fire and the seven flames or tongues a fire is supposed to have—*karali* (frightful), *dhumini* (full of smoke), *shveta* (white), *lohita* (red), *neelalohita* (bluish red), *suvarna* (golden) and *padmaraga* (red like a ruby).

[62] Jataveda is one of Agni's names and means that the Vedas are born from (*jata*) the fire.

[63] Dhata means creator and is also a term used for Brahma and Vishnu.

[64] The preceptor of the gods. In earlier times, Brihaspati was also a term used for Indra.

[65] The word *yama* itself means two or a couple and can therefore also be an adjective used for the two Ashvins. However, if it is not an adjective, the two Yamas can only mean Yama and his sister Yami.

[66] The god of wind or Vayu.

[67] Hiranyareta, the one with the golden (*hiranya*) seed (*reta*) is a name used for the fire and for the sun.

[68] Pavana is the name of the wind and means the purifier.

[69] The word used in the text is Shukra. Shukra is the preceptor of the gods and is also the planet Venus. But it means the virile one and is also a term used for Agni.

[70] The time for destruction.

[71] *Jatharagni* is the digestive fire, that is the gastric fluids, inside the stomach (*jathara*).

[72] The god of the ocean or of water.

[73] The tide goes away, bypassing houses on the shore. In that sense, the fire should bypass the Sharngakas.

[74] The truth.

[75] Jarita.

[76] Instead of wretch, the word *kapurusha* can also be translated as coward.

[77] The saptarshis or seven (*sapta*) great sages (rishi) were born from Brahma's mental powers and were Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha. They are also the seven stars in the constellation Ursa Major. Arundhati was Vasishtha's wife and is also a companion star to Vasishtha in Ursa Major. Arundhati was a devoted wife, except for one transgression, which is why Arundhati is invoked in marriage ceremonies. The star Arundhati is not as dazzling as the star Vasishtha, so it is often difficult to make it out in the night sky and there is also a belief that a person who is approaching death can no longer see Arundhati.

[78] Agneya and vayavya are divine weapons, respectively associated with the gods of fire and the wind. The former causes flames, while the latter causes wind.

[1] Architectural designs.

[2] Maya.

[3] Rice cooked with sweetened milk.

[4] Cubits. Literally the word means a forearm; so the length or span of a forearm.

[5] Kunti was his aunt on his father's side. Krishna's father was in Dvaraka.

[6] Krishna, also used for Vishnu, meaning the lord of the senses.

[7] Droupadi.

[8] This can mean grain of any kind. But it is specifically used for threshed and winnowed rice that has not been dehusked.

[9] A name for Garuda, as well as for his elder brother Aruna.

[10] The name of Krishna and Vishnu's bow, the word signifying that it was made of horn.

[11] A brief instant of time.

[12] Lunar day.

[13] They were yoked to the chariot.

[14] A whisk or fan made out of a yak's tail and a sign of royalty.

[15] About the time of return.

[16] Name for Vishnu or Krishna, meaning the brave one. Also a name for Balarama.

[17] The word used in the text is *bhanda*, which means a vessel, as well as treasure. If the word is translated as vessel, the jewels have been kept in a vessel. But the word transalted as treasure, seems more appropriate given the context.

[18] Vrishaparva is the king of the danavas. Since he is faithful to his promises, he would not have appropriated the treasure.

[19] Yuvanashva's son. His name was Mandhatri and he was born from Yuvanashva's belly.

[20] Bhagiratha was King Sagara's great grandson and needed to bring the celestial river Ganga down to earth, so that his 60,000 ancestors, Sagara's sons, might be freed. Accordingly, he performed penances.

[21] That is, the sacrificial stakes need not have been thus ornamented.

[22] Meaning, Maya.

[23] The word kimkara means servant. Literally, a kimkara is someone who asks what (*kim*) he should do (*kara)*.

[24] Lapis lazuli.

[25] This may not be what is meant. The text uses the word *dvija*, which means any

oviparous animal and can refer to fish, snakes or birds. Most translators have interpreted the word as bird (aquatic). But fish seems more plausible.

26 This may also be a metaphor. The water on the lotus leaves may have been compared with dots of pearls.

27 They mistook it for land.

28 Ducks.

29 Geese.

30 The Greeks, but can also be applied to all foreigners or barbarians.

31 Indra.

32 The words used in the text are *rourava* and *ajina*. *Ruru* is a deer and rourava is its skin. Ajina can be used to mean the hide of a tiger, lion or elephant too, but is commonly used for the hide of a black antelope.

33 Pradyumna.

34 Yuyudhana is one of Satyaki's names.

35 Time. The word also means a cymbal. So an alternative translation is, knowledgeable in the playing of cymbals.

36 Keeping time in music.

37 Yudhishthira.

38 Peace or alliance, war, marching or an expedition, halting or pausing, seeking shelter and duplicity.

39 The traditional four means are *sama* (conciliation or negotiation), *dana* (bribery), *danda* (punishment) and *bheda* (dissension). To these one adds *maya* (delusion or deceit), *upeksha* (neglect) and *indrajala* (magic) to obtain seven means.

40 The number fourteen isn't clear. The most plausible explanation is the fourteen branches of knowledge—the four Vedas, the six Vedangas, the Dharmashastras, the Puranas, Mimamsa and Tarka.

41 The eight royal duties—acceptance or seizure, giving of gifts, use of servants, prohibition, speech, conduct, punishment and purification.

42 One who looks after the fort, the executioner, the one in charge of law, the messenger, the priest and the soothsayer.

43 There is a problem of translation here. The word used in the text is tirtha, which means several things, including a place of pilgrimage. Eighteen places of pilgrimage on the enemy's side and fifteen on one's own side don't make a great deal of sense. However, the word tirtha, also means minister. It is not obvious why there should be eighteen ministers on the enemy's side, and who they are, and why there should be

fifteen on one's own side.

[44] The word used is *patita*, which can also be interpreted in the specific sense of having fallen from one's caste.

[45] Elephants, cavalry and infantry.

[46] Respectively, the four techniques of conciliation, donations, chastisement and dissension, used to govern.

[47] Elephants, cavalry, infantry and chariots.

[48] Elephants, cavalry, infantry, chariots, charioteers, servants, allies and spies.

[49] These pleasures are obviously intended for the later part of the day. They must presumably be known in the forenoon so that arrangements can be made.

[50] Unfortunately, one can't readily deduce the rate of interest, per cent. One pratika is the amount that can be bought with a coin known as *karshapana*, but the karshapana itself had different values.

[51] The word used is *varta*, which in general, means the professions of agriculture, trade, animal husbandry and moneylending. However, the word varta is also used for agriculture in particular.

[52] The five officers who are in charge of the city, the fort, the countryside, the treasury and punishing criminals.

[53] The sense isn't clear. It probably means knowing those (the spies) who are inside the enemy's kingdom.

[54] The day is divided into eight yamas, each yama consisting of three hours. The night consists of three yamas and is therefore also known as *yami* or *yamini.*

[55] The word used is *paschima*, which means last, as well as west.

[56] The eight divisions of medicine—digestive, pediatrics, planetary influences, thorns, bites, secretions, sores, poison and their treatment.

[57] The three Vedas, the Atharva Veda not being counted.

[58] A fee, remuneration or gift offered to brahmanas. A specific type of dakshina is offered to a teacher or preceptor on successful completion of one's studies.

[59] A pundarika is a lotus, usually the white lotus. But it is also the name of a sacrifice.

[60] Covetousness on the part of those who should do the punishing, that is, there is no bribery.

[61] Maintenance of the sacred fire and rendering offerings to it.

[62] Literally, Brahma's staff. However, the expression is used more for the curse of a brahmana.

[63] In this context, varna clearly means caste.

[64] Yama is the king of the ancestors.

[65] Kubera, the lord of treasure and wealth, lives in Kailasa.

[66] Brahma.

[67] Yama's father is Vivasvat, the sun. Hence, Yama is Vaivasvata.

[68] Descendant of Kuru. In this case, Yudhishthira.

[69] A yojana is a measure of distance and is between eight and nine miles.

[70] Shachi is Indra's wife. Mahendra means the great Indra and is one of Indra's ephithets. Shri and Lakshmi were originally independent goddesses, but eventually became identical. Shri is the goddess of prosperity, while Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth.

[71] The word used is *lohita*, which can also be translated as copper.

[72] These are feminine personifications of modesty, fame and radiance respectively.

[73] Faith.

[74] Wisdom.

[75] The goddess of learning, also a river.

[76] A stobha is a sacrificial hymn.

[77] Saptarshi or seven great sages.

[78] Brahmana sages.

[79] Region in north India, around Kumaon. Its capital was Alaka, located on the Alakananda river.

[80] Sunitha has been mentioned before, so has Nala of Nishadha. It is of course possible that more than one person had the same name.

[81] The region around the Punjab, though in the text the reference is to the king of the region.

[82] That is, Rama, the son of Dasharatha.

[83] That is, Parashurama, the son of Jamadagni.

[84] Matsya and Virata are the names of the same kingdom, in today's Rajasthan.

[85] The name of a royal lineage, difficult to identify beyond that.

[86] The name of a royal lineage, difficult to identify beyond that.

[87] There were a hundred kings named Dhritarashtra.

[88] There were eighty kings named Janamejaya.

[89] There were one hundred kings named Brahmadatta.

[90] It is not clear who these Iris were.

[91] There were thousands of kings with this name.

[92] Time or destiny, personified.

[93] Death personified.

[94] *Agnishvatta*, a term used for brahmanas.

[95] All these are classes of ancestors.

[96] Havyavahana, the fire-god Agni.

[97] Tree associated with cremation grounds.

[98] The palasha tree is also called *kimshuka*.

[99] Kind of grass.

[100] Holy grass used in religious ceremonies.

[101] Yama.

[102] Pritha's son, Yudhishthira.

[103] Varuna's queen and consort.

[104] The name of a naga, not to be confused with the famous Krishna.

[105] The name of a naga, not to be confused with Arjuna.

[106] The name of a naga, not be confused with the famous Janamejaya.

[107] Bali was the son of Virochana and Prahlada's (or Prahrada) grandson. Vishnu subjugated him in his dwarf (*vamana*) incarnation.

[108] There are different accounts of Naraka, all agreeing that he was the demon-king of Pragjyotisha and that Krishna killed him.

[109] Dashagriva is Ravana's name. But there is no indication that Ravana is meant here.

[110] Not to be confused with the Bali mentioned earlier.

[111] Vishnu killed two demons named Madhu and Kaitabha. But there is no indication that this is the same Kaitabha.

[112] Varuna's weapon is the noose (*pasha*).

[113] The word used for ocean is *samudra*. Actually, there are seven oceans, not four. However, the word samudra also means four, perhaps explaining why four oceans are mentioned.

[114] Another name for the Yamuna.

[115] Vidisha is the capital of the Dasharna region, the eastern parts of Malava. Vidisha is located on the banks of the rivers Vetravati (Betwa) and Kadambari. However, Vidisha is also a river and is probably the Beas, which joins the Vetravati. However, the Beas is also mentioned separately later.

[116] A river that joins the Krishna river.

[117] Beas.

[118] Sutlej.

[119] Chenab.

[120] Great river that has now dried up.

[121] Jhelum.

[122] Indus.

[123] Devanada means the river of the gods. In the translation, Devanada has been listed as a separate river. But it is also possible that this is an adjective for the Sindhu, describing it as the river of the gods.

[124] The river Krishna. The river Venna, which joins the Krishna, has already been mentioned earlier.

[125] Kubera. Kubera's father was the sage Vishrava, Pulastya's son. Hence, Kubera is known as Vaishravana. Kubera's mother was Idavida. However, Vishrava had another wife named Kaikasi and through her, had Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana and Surpanakha as offspring.

[126] Semi-divine species, companions of Kubera.

[127] Alaka is the name of Kubera's capital.

[128] Beautiful gardens. Specifically, also the name of Indra's garden.

[129] Offer homage to Kubera.

[130] The yakshas are a distinct species, companions of Kubera. They are not gandharvas. But the text here is not careful in maintaining these distinctions.

[131] Kubera's son.

[132] Tryambaka, meaning three-eyed. One of Shiva's names.

[133] Pashupati is Shiva's name and his consort is Uma. Umapati is thus Shiva's name.

[134] The name of a demon.

[135] Uma.

[136] The *bhutas*, spirits and goblins that are Shiva's companions.

[137] Shiva.

[138] Kubera.

[139] Brahma's.

[140] Aditya is the son of Aditi and refers to gods in general. In this context, it means the sun-god.

[141] Yudhishthira.

[142] Gopati, or lord of cattle, a term also used for Indra, Krishna, Shiva and Varuna.

[143] The sun-god.

[144] The twenty-seven nakshatras or constellations.

[145] Preceptor of the demons. But here, Venus.

[146] Preceptor of the gods. But here, Jupiter.

[147] Mercury.

[148] Mars. Literally, the red-coloured one.

[149] Saturn. The text actually says Shanaishchara, meaning the slow-moving one.

[150] This has no exact counterpart in the planets. Rahu is the demon that causes eclipses.

[151] Here, mantra means a hymn from the Rig Veda and rathantara means a hymn from the Sama Veda.

[152] The meaning of Harimat isn't clear, though it might be a proper name.

[153] Probably meaning wealth and riches, unless it is a proper name.

[154] Meaning Indra.

[155] Mitra-Varuna being an example.

[156] *Itihasa*, usually equated with the two epics.

[157] That is, the Savitri mantra.

[158] The seven kinds of speech is a reference to languages spoken in seven different kingdoms, the languages named after the kingdoms—Magadhi, Avanti, Prachya, Shouraseni, Ardhamagadhi, Bahlika and Dakshinatya.

[159] Instant, measure of time equal to four-fifths of a second.

[160] Small measure of time, equal to one-sixth of a *kshana*.

[161] Small measure of time, but also forty-eight minutes.

[162] This probably means the four yugas or eras, with the intervening periods counted as a fifth yuga.

[163] The four quarters into which twenty-four hours are divided.

[164] Semi-divine species, followers of Kubera.

[165] Demons, also referred to as the *kalakeya*s.

[166] The word used in the text is Vrishadvaja, meaning the one with the bull on his flag. Vrishadvaja is one of Shiva's names.

[167] Kubera.

[168] Great rishis.

[169] The word dvipa means island. But it also means a continent or terrestrial region, the sense in which the expression is used here. With Mount Meru in the centre, the earth was divided into four, seven, nine, thirteen or eighteen dvipas, each dvipa separated from another with an ocean. Although the number of dvipas varies from description to description, seven is the usual number.

[170] Royal sacrifice performed when a king instated himself as emperor over all other kings. An integral part of a royal sacrifice was the payment of tribute by all other kings to the undisputed and universal emperor.

[171] This isn't Narada's message to Yudhishthira. It is Pandu's message to Yudhishthira, being conveyed through Narada. The critical edition excises some shlokas available in other versions, where Pandu's request to Narada to act as a messenger is explicitly mentioned.

[172] Brahma rakshasas are demons, but had been born as brahmanas. But they were evil, abducting other men's wives or stealing the property of brahmanas. Consequently, after death, they become demons.

[173] A war is likely, since other kings are forced to offer tribute.

[174] The Dasharhas are the Yadavas and the city of the Dasharhas is Dvaravati or Dvaraka.

[1] *Shatru* means enemy and *ajata* means not being born. So Ajatashatru means someone for whom no enemy has been born, one without foes.

[2] The six types of sacrificial fires are named *agnishtoma, kshatradhriti, vyushti, dviratri, saptapeya* and *saptadashapeya.*

[3] That is, there is no need to wait for any prescribed date. Depending on one's powers, the sacrifice can be started immediately.

[4] Krishna.

[5] Indrasena is Yudhishthira's charioteer and is clearly the one who was sent as messenger.

[6] Krishna.

[7] Kunti.

[8] Parashurama.

[9] Pururava, the son of Ila and Budha, the first king of the lunar dynasty.

[10] Son of Vaivasvata Manu and the first king of the solar dynasty.

[11] The region around Mathura. Mathura was the land of the Yadavas and Jarasandha laid siege to it on eighteen occasions.

[12] Jarasandha. Since *chatura* means clever, Chaturyu may be a reference to Jarasandha's wiliness. Jarasandha was the son of Brihadratha. He was born in two halves that were united by a she-demon named Jara. Thus, the child came to be known as Jarasandha, the word *sandhi* meaning to join.

[13] Probably Vakra being repeated.

[14] Greek. More correctly, Ionian.

[15] This is odd. Elsewhere in the Mahabharata, Bhagadatta is said to rule in the east.

[16] To Jarasandha.

[17] Shishupala. This is repetition again, since Shishupala has been mentioned earlier.

[18] There was a Vasudeva of Pundra who was known as Vasudeva and also sported Krishna's signs. He is referred to a little later. In the text, Vasudeva of Pundra's crimes are ascribed incorrectly to Shishupala, though the commonality is that both were Krishna's enemies.

[19] The eastern part of Bengal.

[20] Kiratas are mountainous tribes who lived through hunting.

[21] Jarasandha has been referred to as Chaturyu earlier. This is clearly a different Chaturyu.

[22] Kingdom in southern India, near today's Tirunelveli. It was near the mountain

Malaya and the river Tamraparni.

[23] Jarasandha was the king of Magadha. Magadha is the southern part of Bihar.

[24] Because the Bhojas are a line of the Yadavas.

[25] The king of Mathura and the son of Ugrasena. Devaki was Krishna's mother and Kamsa was her cousin.

[26] That is, he married Jarasandha's daughters.

[27] Krishna's uncle.

[28] Balarama.

[29] Balarama.

[30] The text uses the expression *shatadha*, which is a weapon that can kill a hundred at a time. More common is the expression *shataghni*, which is also a weapon that can kill a hundred (*shata*) at a time.

[31] Also known as Dimbhaka.

[32] Name for Mathura.

[33] Dvaravati.

[34] Also known as Raivataka.

[35] The Yadavas are descended from Madhu and are known as Madhavas. Madhavitirtha is the same as Raivata and probably means the tirtha of the Madhavas, though Madhavatirtha would have been more appropriate.

[36] The eighteen branches of the Yadavas.

[37] Meaning Pradyumna, the son of Krishna and Rukmini.

[38] Balarama or Baladeva.

[39] Shouri is a name for both Krishna and Balarama. But since Krishna is doing the speaking here, the Shouri in question is Balarama.

[40] An *atiratha* is a warrior on a chariot who is unrivalled in battle.

[41] There are thus ten maharathas.

[42] The middle country is the region around Mathura.

[43] Jarasandha's capital in Magadha.

[44] Meaning the Himalayas.

[45] Meaning Jarasandha, the king of Magadha.

[46] That is, through protecting his subjects.

[47] Pashupati is Shiva, literally, the lord of animals. The sense is that the imprisoned kings have been prepared like sacrificial animals.

[48] Jarasandha is waiting for the tally of imprisoned kings to become one hundred, which is when he will sacrifice them.

[49] Arjuna.

[50] Arjuna obtained the sabha in the sense that it was because of him that Maya built the assembly hall.

[51] Of his enemies.

[52] By becoming ascetics.

[53] That is, if both sides are guided by good policy.

[54] Jarasandha.

[55] An akshouhini is an army and consists of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses and 109,350 infantrymen.

[56] Son of Vishrava. In this context, Kubera.

[57] Brahma.

[58] The root *sandha* (as in *sandhi*) means union or junction.

[59] Brihadratha. A few lines later, Magadha will also be used for Jarasandha.

[60] Meaning, kings.

[61] That is, the ocean.

[62] Jarasandha.

[63] Rudra, Mahadeva and Hara are different names for Shiva. Tripura was a collection of three (*tri*) cities (*pura*), constructed by Maya for the demons. Tripura was in the sky and the three cities were made out of gold, silver and iron. Shiva burnt them down. Tripura is also the name of the demon-king who ruled over these cities.

[64] All names of Yadava tribes.

[1] There is a problem of translation here. The text says *prana yuddha*. *Prana* is the breath of life and *yuddha* is battle. What ensues is a duel and wrestling match between Bhima and Jarasandha. Why is it described as a battle of breath? Some regional versions say *bahu* (arm) yuddha, which fits in with a wrestling match. Is it the case that the strength of one's breath is important in a wrestling match?

[2] Arjuna.

[3] In this case, Arjuna.

[4] Krishna. Shouri is also a name for Balarama.

[5] In this case, Arjuna.

[6] Although used relatively infrequently, Krishna is also one of Arjuna's names.

[7] The sense probably is that forces must be directed to places where the enemy possesses weaknesses. Holes or gaps are symbolic of weaknesses.

[8] Krishna was the Pandavas' cousin.

[9] The word used is *snataka*, meaning a brahmana who has completed his period of celibate student life and is about to step into the householder stage.

[10] Literally, the forest (*jangala*) of the Kuru kingdom. It roughly corresponds to Haryana today.

[11] Literally, a lake with lotuses.

[12] A mountain towards the north.

[13] Geographically, this cannot be in sequence. In sequence, the journey to Magadha would have involved crossing the rivers Gandaki, Sadanira and Shona, in that order.

[14] The river Sarayu flows through Koshala, a region around Ayodha. Again geographically, they should have crossed the Sarayu earlier.

[15] Charmanvati is today's Chambal and actually takes them in a completely opposite direction. The next sentence takes them back to the right route.

[16] The amaranth tree.

[17] Obviously meaning the capital of Magadha, Girivraja or Rajagriha. Girivraja is surrounded by five hills, but none of them is today known as Goratha. These hills will be named in the next chapter.

[18] The word is usually used for a son, but has a more general meaning and can be applied to any student, child, inferior or junior. It is a term of affection. The word is also used for a father or someone in similar paternal position.

[19] Rajagriha's five hills are today known as Vipulagiri, Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Shonagiri and Vaibhara (or Vyahara).

[20] Tree with red or white flowers.

[21] Tree, also known as *piyala*.

[22] That is, there is never scarcity of rain. Mani is also known as Maniman.

[23] There is clearly a problem with the text here, since the word used is *masha*, which means bean. Should it be *mamsa* (meat), as it reads in some regional versions? Then, Brihadratha may have killed a meat-eating demon named Rishabha. Nor is it clear that Rishabha is a proper name. The word also means a bull. In that case, why did Brihadratha kill a bean-eating bull and why is it important enough to be mentioned?

[24] The drums were made out of Rishabha's skin. So perhaps it was a bull.

[25] One of the five peaks.

[26] As a metaphor, by scaling Chaitya.

[27] Presumably, they broke down a fortification on the mountain, rather than the mountain itself. The word *shringa*, which is used, means the peak of a turret, as well as that of a mountain.

[28] Known as *madhuparka* and customarily offered to a guest.

[29] Krishna's name.

[30] On the throne. Sahadeva was Jayadratha's son.

[31] Vishnu's name, and thus Krishna's too.

[32] A crowd had assembled to watch the duel and people had to back off if the wrestlers approached too close.

[33] That is, Krishna didn't directly speak to Bhima what he intended. Directly advising a warrior engaged in a duel would have been improper. Krishna offered advice that seemingly meant one thing, but reading between the lines, was interpreted by Bhima the way Krishna meant it to be interpreted. Bhima understood that Jarasandha was now weakened.

[34] Kunti's son and, in this context, Bhima.

[35] Bhima.

[36] Bhima was the son of the wind-god.

[37] The kings, some of whom must have been Yadavas.

[38] Krishna.

[39] Bhima and Arjuna.

[40] A demon eventually killed by Kartikeya.

[41] Garuda came and sat on the flagstaff.

[42] Krishna.

[43] As the king.

[44] Bhima and Arjuna.

[45] Yudhishthira.

[46] They had also come to Indraprastha.

[47] Krishna.

[48] Droupadi.

[49] Arjuna.

[50] Yudhishthira.

[1] Another name for Kubera, the lord of wealth. Since this was to the north, Arjuna's quest for victory was in a northern direction.

[2] Paka was a demon vanquished by Indra and Arjuna was Indra's son.

[3] Also known as Kulinda, but difficult to pinpoint.

[4] The region around Dvaraka.

[5] Identified with Sialkot.

[6] The word used in the text is dvipa, which not only means island, but also a continent or region of the earth. The earth was commonly believed to be divided into seven continents.

[7] Shakala had kings other than Prativindhya too.

[8] Assam.

[9] Should be identified with Tibet rather than China proper.

[10] Presumably, the Bay of Bengal. The text is best translated as 'surrounded'. However, the sense probably is that these warriors also supported Bhagadatta.

[11] Tone of affection towards a junior, not to be literally interpreted as son.

[12] The tribute.

[13] Kubera.

[14] Brihanta.

[15] It is not clear why Brihanta's intelligence was limited. Some regional versions say that Brihanta was invincible and that certainly fits the circumstances better.

[16] Arjuna was aided in his next campaign by Brihanta.

[17] Arjuna.

[18] A wild tribe that lived in the Himalayas. The word *utsava* means festival and also means height or elevation. It is not obvious how the name Utsavasamketa relates to the word utsava.

[19] Arjuna's name, meaning the one who wore a diadem.

[20] Identified with what is West Bengal now.

[21] The famous Cholas ruled in the south. So this must be a different set of Cholas.

[22] The region around Punjab.

[23] Another name for Arjuna, shorter form of Phalguna or Phalguni.

[24] Area around the Hindu Kush, extending up to Ladakh and Tibet.

[25] Famous battle between the gods and the demons. It took place after Chandra, the moon, abducted Tara, Brihaspati's wife.

[26] One who has no decay, a name usually used for Krishna.

[27] Gandaki is a tributary of the Ganga and Videha is the region to the north-east of Magadha, including parts of what is now Nepal.

[28] Dasharna is the region around Vidisha and there is a geographical problem. Not only is Dasharna far from Videha, it cannot be described as part of the east.

[29] It was an unarmed wrestling match.

[30] Kunti's son. Here, Bhima.

[31] In this context, Bhima.

[32] Shishupala.

[33] That is, accepted Yudhishthira as a sovereign.

[34] The text says *pashubhumi*, translated as the land (*bhumi)* with animals (*pashu*). It is perfectly possible that there might have been someone named Pashubhumi.

[35] This broadly covers the territory of Bengal, that is, West Bengal and Bangladesh. It was to the west of Vanga.

[36] Karna was the king of Anga.

[37] Probably a wrestling match.

[38] The name of a river, Koshi in Bihar.

[39] Bengal, specifically the eastern part, mostly in Bangladesh now.

[40] Capital of the Suhmas. Tamralipta is identified with today's Tamluk. At that time, it was on the sea.

[41] Pavana is the god of the wind and Bhima was his son.

[42] The Brahmaputra River, so named because it had a reddish tinge.

[43] Bhima.

[44] The text says ten *kotis* and a koti is ten million.

[45] There is a geographical inconsistency, since the Shurasenas refer to the region around Mathura.

[46] Also known as Virata, in Rajasthan today.

[47] Kuntibhoja.

[48] Of the Pandavas.

[49] The river Chambal.

[50] The next sentence states that this son's name was Bhoja.

[51] There is a problem with the text of the critical edition here. It is not clear whom this tribute was extracted from. Other versions have a sentence about Sahadeva defeating the Sekas. Had this sentence been included in the critical edition, the tribute would have been from the Sekas.

[52] The country around the Narmada. Its capital was Ujjayini (Ujjain), also known as Avantipuri.

[53] The capital of the Chedi kingdom, adjacent to Avanti. In today's Madhya Pradesh.

[54] The critical edition excises shlokas that give the story. Agni seduced King Nila's daughter and was caught in the act.

[55] Agni was in the form of a brahmana and the king did not recognize him.

[56] As wives.

[57] To one husband.

[58] The word used is *svairini*. This means a woman who is her own mistress and is unrestrained. But specifically, it is used for a wanton or unchaste woman.

[59] One of Agni's names. Literally, the purifier.

[60] Yudhishthira.

[61] Sahadeva.

[62] This is not a reference to the Tripura that is towards the east. The Chedis were known as the Traipuras and their capital was Tripuri.

[63] In today's Gujarat.

[64] Bhishmaka's daughter Rukmini was married to Krishna.

[65] Land between the rivers Narmada and Godavari.

[66] This is a literal translation and clearly misses a nuance. For example, there may have been only footpaths in the forest and *ekapadi* means a footpath. So *ekapada* might mean those who used footpaths, rather than men with single legs.

[67] Perhaps the Cholas.

[68] Identified as residents of Antioch.

[69] Identified as residents of Rome.

[70] The yavanas.

[71] Today's Gujarat.

[72] Ravana's younger brother, the son of the sage Pulastya.

[73] Sahadeva.

[74] Vibhishana.

[75] Krishna.

[76] The Indus River.

[77] Abhiras are cowherds.

[78] That is, the river.

[79] Nakula.

[80] Vasudeva.

[81] Nakula's.

[82] Nakula's mother Madri was Shalya's sister.

[83] This can also be translated, instead of as a proper name, as *barbaras*, meaning those who were barbarians or not Aryas.

[84] Dvaraka is to the west and when Dvaraka was established, these regions were conquered by Krishna.

[1] Yudhishthira.

[2] Krishna.

[3] A demon killed by Krishna.

[4] Krishna.

[5] Yudhishthira.

[6] The Dasharhas were the Yadavas.

[7] Yudhishthira's.

[8] Yudhishthira.

[9] Yudhishthira.

[10] Yudhishthira's charioteer.

[11] Bhima's charioteer.

[12] Sahadeva. Yudhishthira is speaking to Sahadeva.

[13] The officiating priests are called *ritvijas*. There are four types of officiating priests —*hotar* (one who recites from the Rig Veda), *udgatar* (one who recites from the Sama Veda), *adhvaryu* (one who recites from the Yajur Veda) and brahman (one who recites from the Atharva Veda). This brahman is not to be confused with the supreme soul (brahman or *paramatman*).

[14] Dvaipayana or Vedavyasa.

[15] He was thus the udgatar. This Dhananjaya is a lineage of brahmanas and is not to be confused with Arjuna.

[16] Yudhishthira.

[17] Sahadeva.

[18] Nakula.

[19] Drona.

[20] Drona has already been mentioned once.

[21] Another name for Drupada.

[22] Balarama.

[23] Assistant priests.

[24] Heaven.

[25] Bhishma.

[26] Drona.

[27] Ashvatthama.

[28] One of Duryodhana's brothers.

[29] Vidura's name. The word means the son of a kshatriya father.

[30] The text doesn't specify one thousand of what. The sense is that irrespective of the type of gift, the threshold was at least one thousand.

[31] The kings.

[1] That is, the formal anointment or coronation at the end of the sacrifice.

[2] Hari is Vishnu's name and so is Pundarikaksha. Pundarika is a lotus, typically the white lotus, and *aksha* means eye. So Pundarikaksha means lotus-eyed.

[3] The gods.

[4] Shambhu is one who brings prosperity. It is usually used for Shiva, and sometimes Kartikeya and Ganesha too. But here, it is being used for Vishnu.

[5] Shishupala is addressing Yudhishthira.

[6] Bhishma, who was Ganga's son.

[7] Krishna is Vaasudeva, that is, Vasudeva's son. Krishna has been written as Vasudeva, not Vaasudeva, to make the reading easier. In most instances, there is no danger of confusion, this being an exception. Krishna's father, Vasudeva, is also present.

[8] This is a reference to either Kamsa or Jarasandha. But Krishna did not directly kill Jarasandha.

[9] Though not explicitly mentioned, these words are clearly being uttered by Vaishampayana.

[10] In this context, meaning Bhishma.

[11] Satvata is a name for Vishnu, and Krishna.

[12] Alternatively, son-in-law, as indicative of someone who deserves to be honoured.

[13] Those born from wombs and eggs, plants and those born from sweat (insects and worms).

[14] Because he doesn't have the intelligence.

[15] Demon killed by Krishna.

[16] Of kings.

[17] Another name for Shishupala.

[1] Indra's name.

[2] Krishna.

[3] Vishnu and Krishna's name.

[4] Krishna.

[5] This is a reference to Bhishma's vow of celibacy. By the third state, Bhishma is being called an eunuch.

[6] Ogress killed by Krishna.

[7] That is, those who are childlike in intelligence.

[8] Putana assumed the form of a vulture.

[9] Demons killed by Krishna. Keshi was in the form of a horse (*ashva*) and Arishta was in the form of a bull (*vrishabha*).

[10] One of Krishna's feats as a baby. He was asleep under the cart.

[11] Krishna held up the mountain to provide shelter from the pouring rain.

[12] Vrishabha.

[13] Putana.

[14] A bird that lives off carrion. It picks out bits of meat from the mouths of predators.

[15] This is a reference to Dvaipayana fathering Dhritarashtra and Pandu.

[16] Bhishma has not served his ancestors, because he did not have a son.

[17] Fish.

[18] Another bird.

[19] Krishna.

[20] That is, refused the food.

[21] The Ganga flows in heaven, earth and the nether regions.

[22] The great god. In this context, Shiva.

[23] Another name for Kartikeya.

[24] Shishupala.

[25] Bhima.

[26] Shishupala.

[27] Shishupala.

[28] Balarama.

[29] Shishupala's father was married to a princess from the Yadava clan.

[30] Damodara is one of Krishna's names.

[31] That is, sunk into the forehead and disappeared.

[32] The word used is *nandana*, meaning son. But the word also means someone (or something) that brings delight and pleasure. Therefore, it can also be interpreted as Krishna, the one who brings pleasure to the Yadu lineage.

[33] Bhishma is speaking to Bhima.

[34] Since it is so meagre.

[35] Drona's son, that is, Ashvatthama.

[36] Implying, censure and worship of those one doesn't have complete information about.

[37] Kamsa was the king of Bhoja and Bhoja is one of Kamsa's names.

[38] The Yadavas.

[39] Horse sacrifice.

[40] Another name for Akrura.

[41] She was to have been married to Karusha.

[42] Krishna's wife.

[43] Rukmini was the daughter of King Bhishmaka of Vidarbha. Her father had promised her in marriage to Shishupala. However, Rukmini loved Krishna and sent him a letter. At that, Krishna and Balarama arrived, defeated Rukmini's brother Rukmi, and took Rukmini away.

[44] They were undecided.

[45] Yudhishthira.

[46] Yudhishthira again.

[47] Shishupala's.

[48] In general, a bow made of horn. Specifically, the name of Vishnu's bow.

[49] The text has the word *avavritha*. This is the ceremonial bathing at the end of any sacrifice, for purposes of purification.

[50] Yudhishthira's name.

[51] Drupada.

[52] Subhadra's son was Abhimanyu.

[53] As has been mentioned before, the word nandana also means beloved. So, this can also be translated as—O beloved of the Kuru lineage!

[54] The text says Tarkshya, which is one of Garuda's names.

[55] Parjanya. Indra is the god of rain, so Parjanya is one of Indra's names. The word *parjanya* can also mean clouds in general and that translation, without invoking the god

of rain, is also possible.

[56] Indra.

[57] Shakuni was the son of Subala, king of Gandhara.

[1] The word used is nandana, which can also be translated as beloved.

[2] Nagasahrya is another name for Hastinapura.

[3] Duryodhana.

[4] Yudhishthira. At the end of the last chapter, it was mentioned that only Duryodhana and Shakuni remained. Since the Pandavas were still there, this means that these were the only two among the invited guests who remained.

[5] Duryodhana took the land to be water.

[6] In this context, Yudhishthira.

[7] *Gaja, naga* and *hasti*, all mean elephant. Gajasahrya is another name for Hastinapura.

[8] Shakuni's sister was Gandhari, Duryodhana's mother.

[9] Arjuna's horses were white.

[10] Yudhishthira.

[11] The expression in the text translates as the onset of *shuchishukra* and there is repetition. *Shuchi* means the months of Jyeshtha and Ashada and would have sufficed. *Shukra* means the month of Jyeshtha.

[12] Yadavas, the foremost one being Krishna.

[13] Yudhishthira.

[14] Yudhishthira.

[15] The sons of Dhritarashtra, the Kouravas.

[16] Ashvatthama.

[17] Karna, who was brought up by a suta or charioteer. The charioteer's wife was Radha, explaining Karna's name of Radheya.

[18] Kripacharya, who was descended from the Goutama lineage.

[19] Bhurishrava, the son of Somadatta.

[20] The Pandavas.

[21] Dyuta is the act of playing or gambling. Here, the text uses the word for a dice, that is, *aksha*.

[22] Referring to Dhritarashtra.

[23] Yudhishthira.

[24] Duryodhana's mother was Gandhari.

[25] The word nandana is again used, so it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[26] Also known as *kadala*.

[27] A vatadhana is a brahmana, who has been born of a brahmana mother and a father who is a brahmana but an outcast.

[28] A kharva is simply a very large number, 1 followed by 10 zeroes, or 10 billion.

[29] Water pots used by ascetics.

[30] The word used in the text is *madhu*.

[31] The pots.

[32] A reference to the Pandava conquests.

[33] That is, large numbers of brahmanas were continuously being fed.

[34] Kubera.

[35] Of the dice.

[36] Yudhishthira.

[37] Shakuni.

[38] Vidura.

[39] The pros and cons of the decision.

[40] The advent of kali yuga was imminent.

[41] The word sons is being used in a broad sense, as the Pandavas are also like Dhritarashtra's sons.

[42] He went to Bhishma, Ganga's son.

[43] Vyasa's student is Vaishampayana. Vaishampayana had recounted the story to Janamejaya. But it was retold again in Naimisha forest by Lomaharshana's son Ugrashrava. The suta here is Ugrashrava, retelling the story for the benefit of the sages.

[44] The word used is *mahakavi*, or great *kavi.* Kavi is a wise one, the meaning of a poet is a secondary one.

[45] Distant and divine lake.

[46] Presumably Arjuna.

[47] Yudhishthira's.

[48] This chapter, and the ones that follow, are repetitive. Duryodhana has already related this to Shakuni. He now recounts it to Dhritarashtra. One gets a clear sense that these chapters were later interpolations. They lack continuity and coherence.

[49] A kind of antelope.

[50] The word used is *pilu*.

[51] The word used is *shami.*

[52] The *inguda* nut.

[53] Govasana brahmanas look after cattle and dasamiya brahmana*s* are fit to be servants. When relating the story to Shakuni, Duryodhana mentioned *vatadhana* brahmanas.

[54] Kamandalu.

[55] In Gujarat today.

[56] A kind of antelope.

[57] That is, those who live in dry areas.

[58] The word used is *ashma*, meaning either iron or stone. The word also means sapphire, but that use is rarer.

[59] A reddish insect, sometimes identified with a firefly.

[60] The text uses the word *indrayudha*, meaning Indra's weapon. The specific weapon in question is the bow and the rainbow is known as Indra's bow.

[61] The word used is *sandhya*, which can mean evening as well as dawn.

[62] These were wild horses that had been seized, as opposed to domestically bred horses.

[63] Yudhishthira.

[64] Identified as Scythians.

[65] Inhabitants of Odra, today's Orissa.

[66] Identified as Bactria.

[67] Ranku is a kind of antelope.

[68] *Rishti.*

[69] Implying the west.

[70] Identified as Romans.

[71] *Arbuda.*

[72] Iron arrows.

[73] It is not clear who this king is. It could be Bhagadatta, but Bhagadatta went away without entering.

[74] The text uses the expressions *kichaka* and *venu*. The latter is bamboo, while the former is hollow bamboo.

[75] The ants dug up the gold from the earth. Pipilika is an ant. There is a reference in Herodotus to ants that dug up gold in the desert regions.

[76] The Brahmaputra.

[77] A specific type of sandalwood.

[78] Identified as Persians.

[79] A river.

[80] The kings.

[81] Yajnasena's daughter, Droupadi.

[82] Droupadi, the princess of Panchala, was married to the Pandavas.

[83] Vedanta is the end (anta) of the Vedas and usually refers to the Upanishads. The term is also used for the six schools of philosophy that followed.

[84] Yudhishthira.

[85] The king of Kamboja.

[86] Shishupala.

[87] Shishupala again.

[88] Since Jarasandha had already been killed, this is Sahadeva.

[89] The king of Pamshu.

[90] Virata.

[91] Of the chariot.

[92] From the Vrishni lineage.

[93] Alternatively, Asita-Devala. These are two ancient sages, Asita and Devala, who are always referred to together.

[94] The actual act of coronation or anointing by sprinkling sacred water.

[95] Parashurama.

[96] Yudhisthira.

[97] Yudhishthira.

[98] This is a reference to the conquest of the Pandavas.

[99] These eight didn't become unconscious.

[100] Pradyumna killed a demon named Shambara. Pradyumna was the son of Krishna and Rukmini. However, there is no account of this Pradyumna having undertaken any great sacrifices. But Pradyumna is also a name for Kama, or the god of love, and he is also known as the killer of Shambara. The reference could therefore be to Kama.

[101] The Pandavas.

[102] The Kouravas.

[103] This is an odd statement, since Dhritarashtra is not reported to have had any other wives. Dhritarashtra probably means that Gandhari is older than Kunti and Madri.

[104] The other sons.

[105] A demon killed by Shakra (Indra).

[106] Ajamidha is Dhritarashtra's name, in addition to being Yudhishthira's name.

[107] Yudhishthira.

[108] Some chapters, including this one, are repetition. Vidura has already been consulted in Chapter 45.

[109] On which the game is played.

[110] The word used is nandana.

[111] The word used for a straw-mat is a *kata* and there is probably an unintended pun, since kata is also a particular throw of the dice.

[112] Assembly hall where the game will be played.

[113] The servants.

[114] A measure of distance equal to one-fourth of a yojana.

[115] Yudhishthira.

[116] Yudhishthira's.

[117] Vidura.

[118] Dhritarashtra's sons.

[119] The word used is *duradara*. This means a gambler, which is probably what is intended. But the word also means the stakes used in gambling and the box in which dice are kept.

[120] This can also be translated as cheats.

[121] Alternatively, cheats.

[122] Alternatively, cheats.

[123] The sense is that Vidura is like a father and Vidura will have the welfare of the Pandavas in mind. Therefore, Yudhishthira will agree because of what Vidura says, not because of what Dhritarashtra wants.

[124] Alternatively, shameless.

[125] That is, robs the eye of sight.

[126] Ashvatthama.

[127] The fourth of the twenty-seven nakshatras, Aldebaran.

[128] Dhritarasthra. The word father is to be interpreted in a broad sense.

[129] Because he was blind.

[130] This has been translated literally and the gesture is a sign of affection.

[131] The word used is nandana.

[132] Yudhishthira has already been welcomed.

[133] Droupadi's name.

[134] They awoke.

[135] The gamblers.

[136] The sense is that Yudhishthira uses his wealth for the sake of brahmanas. Therefore, Shakuni should limit his winnings.

[137] The gems were presumably pearls.

[138] Gold is mentioned twice and two different words are used, *hiranya* and *jatarupa*. Since both words mean gold, the distinction between them isn't clear. However, since hiranya also means a golden vessel, as distinct from gold, that might be the distinction. Alternatively, hiranya also means silver, or any other precious metal.

[139] The word used is *padmini*, which can also mean that they have lotus marks on them. However, for elephants, padmini means the elephants are spotted. The word padmini also denotes a female elephant.

[140] The word in the text actually means the shaft of a carriage or a plough, not any shaft.

[141] That is, monsoon clouds.

[142] The word used is *kambukeyura*. *Keyura* is an armlet or upper bracelet. *Kambu* means a conch shell or a bracelet. Therefore, 'armlets made of conch shells' is also an acceptable translation. However, armlets and bracelets seem more correct.

[143] The number isn't specified here, but clearly means one thousand or thousands.

[144] The king of the gandharvas.

[145] The one with the Gandiva as a bow. One of Arjuna's names.

[146] Vidura is addressing Dhritarashtra.

[147] Shukracharya's name. Shukracharya is the preceptor of the demons.

[148] The collector of honey has climbed a tree and is liable to fall down.

[149] Duryodhana.

[150] There is a break in continuity in the critical edition. Some regional versions have an additional shloka, to the effect that it is normal royal practice to abandon an unworthy son.

[151] Kamsa.

[152] Duryodhana's name.

[153] That is, give up Duryodhana and resort to the Pandavas, and so on.

[154] The name of a demon killed by Indra.

[155] So that he could get all the gold at once.

[156] Indra.

[157] Shantanu's father.

[158] Without reproducing the Sanskrit, this is an impossible sentence (half of a shloka) to translate, because the meaning is obscure. In all probability, it is a reference to Yudhishthira, who is composed.

[159] Probably a reference to Arjuna.

[160] Yudhishthira's name.

[161] Shakuni was from Gandhara, a mountainous region.

[162] The sense is that Vidura's secret inclinations now stand revealed.

[163] The creator.

[164] The creator.

[165] Vidura is now speaking to Duryodhana.

[166] The word used is nandana.

[167] Referring to the Pandavas.

[168] Ten thousand. These large numbers are not stated in ascending (or descending) order.

[169] A million.

[170] Ten billion.

[171] One thousand billion.

[172] One hundred million.

[173] One hundred billion.

[174] A billion.

[175] Of riches.

[176] The Indus River.

[177] The other four Pandava brothers.

[178] Shakuni is the one who is not loved by Yudhishthira.

[179] Arjuna.

[180] Indra.

[181] Krishna and Panchali are both Droupadi's names.

[182] Droupadi.

[183] Yudhishthira.

[184] A bamboo has fruit only when it is old.

[185] This is an allusion to an old story that is not recounted completely in the text, perhaps because it was a familiar one. Thieves stole a goat. But when they were ready to kill the goat, they couldn't find the knife, because it had got buried in the ground. So they set the goat free. Prancing around, the goat unearthed the knife and got slaughtered in the process.

[186] The sense is that one who should know better, like the ascetic, is censured if he performs an evil act, but not one who cannot differentiate between good and evil.

[187] Gourds are light and float. Gourds sinking conveys a sense of impossibility.

[188] The word used is *pathya*, which not only means advice, but also medicine and right diet.

[189] The word pathya is used again.

[190] The attendant, usher.

[191] The attendant was of the suta class, that is, a charioteer and bard.

[192] Yudhishthira's house. Since he was in Duryodhana's service, the attendant had no choice.

[193] A reference to Duryodhana.

[194] There seems to be a break in continuity in the text. The Pratikamin was Duryodhana's servant and Yudhishthira sent one of his own instead. As a result of this summons, Droupadi came to the assembly hall.

[195] Meaning Dhritarashtra.

[196] The Pratikamin.

[197] Duryodhana's.

[198] Duhshasana. There is a logical incoherence in the text. In what follows, Duhshasana brings Droupadi to the assembly hall. In that case, she couldn't already have been in the assembly hall, as a result of the summons sent by Yudhishthira through his trusted messenger. Different versions and different interpolations no doubt lead to this inconsistency.

[199] Dhritarashtra.

[200] Duhshasana.

[201] Jishnu means the victorious one and is a name for Indra, Vishnu and also Arjuna. Hari is Vishnu's name. Nara is an ancient sage, and also means a man. The words Nara and Narayana are often used for Arjuna and Krishna respectively.

[202] The Pandavas.

[203] Yudhishthira.

[204] Yudhishthira.

[205] This probably means Dhritarashtra, though Vidura could also have been intended.

[206] Duryodhana.

[207] Shakuni.

[208] Sahadeva is being asked because he kept the sacrificial fire for the Pandavas.

[209] Vikarna is one of Duryodhana's brothers.

[210] Drona.

[211] Yudhishthira.

[212] He grasped his own shining arms.

[213] The word used is nandana.

[214] The critical edition excises some shlokas that exist in regional versions and in popular renderings of the story. Droupadi prayed to Krishna and he ensured that Droupadi wasn't stripped.

[215] Referring to Duhshasana.

[216] Virochana.

[217] The *ashvattha* tree.

[218] The witnesses are false witnesses.

[219] Indra.

[220] Droupadi.

[221] Parshata is Drupada and his son is Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's brother.

[222] The spirit or soul has departed from these bodies.

[223] Duryodhana.

[224] If Yudhishthira has been won and has no independent identity or property, he uttered a lie in staking Droupadi. On the other hand, if Yudhishthira has not been won and has independent identity and property, he uttered a lie in staking himself. In either event, he is a liar.

[225] Yudhishthira.

[226] Dhritarashtra's household.

[227] Meaning Yudhishthira.

[228] Yudhishthira.

[229] Karna.

[230] Karna was brought up by a suta, though he was Kunti's son.

[231] Yudhishthira.

[232] Duryodhana was inviting Droupadi to come and sit on his left thigh, since the left thigh is the seat of the wife. The right thigh is the seat of daughters and daughters-in-law.

[233] The expression used is *yogakshema*. Both these words have diverse meanings. However, *kshema* means preserving what has already been acquired and *yoga* means obtaining that which has not yet been acquired.

[234] Duryodhana.

[235] As an ill omen. The agnihotra is the maintenance of the sacred fire in a house.

[236] Gandhari is Subala's daughter.

[237] Kripacharya, who was descended from Goutama.

[238] Dhritarashtra. Clearly, only Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Vidura and Gandhari understood these to be ill omens.

[239] Yudhishthira and Droupadi's son.

[240] An ancient sage.

[241] In the sense of objectives or directions.

[242] Bhima is now speaking to Yudhishthira.

[243] Arjuna.

[244] Or diet or regimen, the word used being pathya.

[245] This is a repetition of what Arjuna has said.

[246] Meaning the Kouravas.

[247] Droupadi.

[1] Duryodhana.

[2] Duhshasana.

[3] This is what Brihaspati said.

[4] The Pandavas.

[5] Yudhishthira.

[6] Ashvatthama.

[7] Though Vidura has already been mentioned by name, this means Vidura, who was the son of a vaishya woman.

[8] Bhishma.

[9] Vidura.

[10] Alternatively, bridge.

[11] Dhritarashtra's name.

[12] Dhritarashtra.

[13] Yudhishthira's.

[14] Addressing Yudhishthira.

[15] Ascetics who live in the forest.

[16] Unlike proper ascetics.

[17] Duhshasana.

[18] Shakuni.

[19] Duhshasana.

[20] Bhima.

[21] Yudhishthira.

[22] Duryodhana.

[23] A lion is the king of deer.

[24] Yama's name.

[25] Bhishma.

[26] One of Dhritarashtra's sons.

[27] Kunti.

[28] A sage.

[29] Parashurama.

[30] Shiva.

[31] A river.

[32] This is specifically addressed to Yudhishthira.

[33] The Kouravas and the Pandavas.

[34] Droupadi.

[35] She was in her menses.

[36] The city of the elephant, another name for Hastinapura.

[37] Vidura's.

[38] One shouldn't forget that Dhritarashtra is blind.

[39] Yudhishthira.

[40] Some regional versions say *bharya* (wife) instead of the arya of the critical edition. Given the context, wives makes better sense.

[41] Another name for the sacred kusa grass.

[42] Parvani means the day of the full moon or the day of the new moon.

[43] The Pandava kingdom.

[44] Cannot be killed, is also a possible translation. But should not be killed, seems more appropriate.

[45] This is specifically addressed to Duryodhana.

[46] Sages. The story has been recounted in Volume 1.

[47] Dhrishtadyumna.

[48] Prishata is Drupada's name.

[49] From this it appears that Vidura is still describing the events to Dhritarashtra.

[50] Drona.

[51] Nothing happens to this instruction and there is disconnect with what happens next. The fortunate sons are the Pandavas and Vidura doesn't go to try and bring them back. If they decide to go to the forest, Dhritarashtra is offering the Pandavas weapons, chariots and infantry. However, this doesn't materialize. Both this chapter and the next seem to have been added on later.

[52] Dhritarashtra's charioteer.

[53] She was born from the middle of the altar.

[54] Duryodhana.

[55] Droupadi was in her menses.

[56] Sanjaya.

[1] Droupadi.

[2] Droupadi.

[3] Yudhishthira's charioteer.

[4] Kripacharya, who was descended from Goutama.

[5] Dhritarashtra.

[6] Another name for the Ganga.

[7] The sacrificial fire.

[8] Yudhishthira.

[9] The hour is terrible because demons are most powerful then.

[10] The Pandavas.

[11] That is, the brothers cannot find means of subsistence for the brahmanas.

[12] *Samkhya* is one of the six schools of philosophy, attributed to the sage Kapila. Both *samkhya* and yoga will be encountered later, in the Bhagavad Gita section. This entire section is reminiscent of the Bhagavad Gita.

[13] Yoga has eight elements—yama (restraint), *niyama* (rituals), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breathing), *pratyahara* (withdrawal), *dharana* (retention), *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (liberation). That's the reason the expression *ashtanga* (eight-formed) yoga is used.

[14] Sacred texts that have been revealed, they have no author.

[15] Sacred texts that have authors. They have been heard and memorized, and thus passed down the generations.

[16] A royal sage, not to be confused with the Janaka who was Sita's father.

[17] Attachment is a more serious evil than the desire for material objects.

[18] One who can see the faults of attachment, without withdrawing.

[19] The thirst for material possessions.

[20] The text does not state this explicitly. But this seems to be the place where Janaka's quote ends.

[21] Ascetics do not cook for themselves.

[22] The grass or straw is for this.

[23] The ground is for this.

[24] To the guest, in the sense of paying attention to him or her.

[25] Svapachas are *chandalas* or outcasts. Svapacha is sometimes translated as dog-eater, but this doesn't follow. Unlike others, chandalas kept dogs and were accompanied by them. Svapacha can also mean someone who cooks in the company of dogs, or cooks

for dogs.

[26] Ten gods regarded as the sons of Vishva—Vasu, Satya, Kratu, Daksha, Kala, Kama, Dhriti, Kuru, Pururava and Madravashva. Alternatively, the food offerings on the ground are for the Vishvadevas (counted as one), Agni, Soma, Dhanvantari, Kuhu, Anumati, Prajapati, heaven, earth and Agni.

[27] The mind and the five senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell.

[28] The way of the ancestors. Along this path, one has to be reborn.

[29] The way of the gods. Along this path, one is freed and does not have to be reborn.

[30] They do not have to be born again.

[31] The sun-god.

[32] *Uttarayana*, the movement of the sun to the north of the equator, the period from the winter to the summer solstice.

[33] *Dakshinayana*, the movement of the sun to the south of the equator, the period from the summer to the winter solstice.

[34] The moon.

[35] Pungent, sour, sweet, salty, bitter and astringent.

[36] This Bhima is not the same as Bhimasena.

[37] The sun-god.

[38] Of the sun.

[39] The text actually says son of Aditi.

[40] Actually, 109 names are mentioned, which means that one of these is an adjective rather than a proper name. But it is not possible to determine which one is the adjective.

[41] One of the sun's names, meaning one who gives light.

[42] A prayer to the sun-god has been given and ends here.

[43] At Yudhishthira's prayers.

[44] The critical edition excises some shlokas here. In these missing shlokas, the sun-god presents Droupadi with a copper vessel. Until Droupadi had eaten, the copper vessel would remain full and others could be fed. But once she had eaten, the vessel would become empty.

[45] Yudhisthira had immersed himself in the water to pray to Surya.

[46] Fruit, roots, meat and vegetables.

[47] Vighasa means leftover food, or half-eaten morsels.

[48] Prishata's (Drupada) daughter, Droupadi.

[49] Yudhishthira.

[50] Dhritarashtra.

[51] Since Dhritarashtra was blind, this means inner sight.

[52] This sounds like a contradiction, because Dhritarashtra was tormented, but was happily seated. However, typos in Sanskrit are also possible and *sukha* (happiness) can be confused with *duhkha* (unhappiness). Alternatively, happily might be an adjective referring to the comfortable seat, rather than Dhritarashtra's state of mind.

[53] Since Bhargava means descendant of Bhrigu, it is not clear who is meant. It could be either Shukracharya or Parashurama.

[54] The Pandavas.

[55] Referring to the Pandavas.

[56] Dharma, artha and kama.

[57] The Pandavas.

[58] Duryodhana.

[59] Yudhishthira.

[60] Karna.

[61] All three are famous rivers.

[62] If the Gandiva is lost in such a match.

[63] Ajamidha is a name that is usually used for Yudhishthira or Dhritarashtra. It is now being used for Vidura.

[64] The word used is pathya, which also means the diet and regimen in times of illness.

[65] Pathya again.

[66] Yudhishthira.

[67] The word used is nandana. So this can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[68] Dhritarashtra.

[69] Duryodhana.

[70] Dhritarashtra's.

[71] Dhritarashtra.

[72] That is, a neutral position.

[73] Duryodhana.

[74] When the Pandavas have been killed.

[75] Vedavyasa.

[76] Dhritarashtra.

[77] The name of a famous cow that yielded everything one desired. Also, the divine cow that was the mother of all cows.

[78] One of Indra's names.

[79] There are two bulls yoked to the plough.

[80] Dhritarashtra had one hundred sons through Gandhari. In addition, he had Yuyutsu as a son, through a vaishya woman.

[81] Dhritarashtra.

[82] The forest region around Kurukshetra.

[83] The word used can be translated more literally as the central pillar to which bulls are tethered when threshing work is undertaken.

[84] The word used is nandana, so it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[85] Dasyus are a class of evil beings that are enemies of both man and god and were slain by Indra. The word also means outcast and bandit, or a villain in general.

[86] The Pandavas.

[87] Kirmira.

[88] Prishata's son. Prishata is Drupada and Drupada's son is Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's brother.

[89] The sense is that only gods would contemplate such a confrontation.

[90] The text says *vayu*, which means wind or air. There is probably a typo here. Touching the water is a preparatory ritual before a curse is pronounced. Therefore, instead of air, it should probably have been *var*, or water.

[1] The Pandavas.

[2] Cranes flying in the cloud.

[3] A bear is *riksha*. But riksha also means a star or constellation. More specifically, riksha originally meant Krittika or the Pleiades. Subsequently, it came to mean the constellation saptarshi or Great Dipper, part of Ursa Majoris or Great Bear. Because the text uses the singular, clearly either of the two specific constellations is meant.

[4] Droupadi.

[5] The story has been recounted in Section 10, Volume 1. Baka was killed in Ekachakra, but the capital of the kingdom was named Vetrakriyagriha.

[6] Hidimba's.

[7] This great asura is Vatapi and the story of Agastya and Vatapi will be told in Section 33.

[8] A vyama is a measure of length. It is the distance between the tips of the fingers of the two hands, when the arms are extended out.

[9] Bhima.

[10] Indra.

[11] Kirmira. Bhima hit Kirmira on the head with the tree.

[12] Yama's name, meaning the one with a staff (*danda*) in his hand (*pani*).

[13] This is a story from the Ramayana.

[14] Rahu's name. Rahu swallows up the sun, causing an eclipse.

[15] A reference to Pandu.

[16] This suggests that the Dvaita forest was the same as the Kamyaka forest.

[17] Yudhishthira.

[18] Dhritarashtra.

[1] Though the plural is used, this essentially means Dhrishtadyumna.

[2] Krishna's.

[3] Arjuna.

[4] Meaning, earlier lives.

[5] This is not a literal translation. The text uses the word *yatrasayamgriha*. This means a hermit who finds a home (*griha)* wherever (*yatra)* evening (*sayam*) finds him. So that hermit has no home.

[6] This is the hermitage (ashrama) of Badari, known also as Badarika and Badarikashrama. This is one of the several sources of the Ganga and the hermitages of Nara and Narayana are located there.

[7] Naraka or Narakasura was a demon who was born from the earth (*bhumi*) and known as Bhoumya. He ruled in Pragjyotisha. He stole Aditi's earrings. Krishna killed Naraka and recovered these earrings. Krishna also freed the 16,000 ladies Naraka had imprisoned.

[8] Indra. Shachi is Indra's wife.

[9] Both Narayana and Hari are Vishnu's names.

[10] The moon.

[11] The creator. This is also a name used for Brahma and Vishnu.

[12] The fire.

[13] The wind.

[14] Vaishravana is the son of Vishrava. Here, Kubera is meant.

[15] Destiny, or time.

[16] A sacrifice designed to ensure non-attachment.

[17] Since the word used is nandana, this can also be translated as descendant of the Yadavas.

[18] The twelve Adityas are sons of Aditi and in this list, Vishnu is younger than Indra.

[19] This is a reference to Vishnu's vamana or dwarf incarnation, explaining why the word child is used. Bali was a generous demon and granted the dwarf incarnation a boon. Using the three steps, the dwarf covered the three worlds and Bali had no option but to go to the underworld.

[20] It is now impossible to know who the Mauravas and the Pashas were.

[21] Not the Pandava Bhimasena.

[22] Rukmini was the daughter of King Bhishmaka of Vidarbha, Bhoja being another name for Vidarbha. Rukmini was to be married to Shishupala. But she loved Krishna and

wrote him a letter. Krishna arrived with Balarama and defeated Rukmini's brother Rukmi. Krishna then carried Rukmini away and married her.

23 The city of Dvaraka is on the ocean and the Yadavas moved from Mathura to Dvaraka.

24 The Dasharhas are the Yadavas.

25 The one without decay, Krishna's name.

26 The rishis approach Krishna in their own hearts.

27 When there is destruction.

28 The word *vairaja* is used for anything belonging to the brahman.

29 Droupadi.

30 These words are being spoken by Droupadi.

31 Parashurama.

32 Because these rajarshis have overcome the desire to fight.

33 She was in her menses.

34 Jaya is a synonym for wife and is derived from the root of being born.

35 The youngest is Sahadeva.

36 Duryodhana.

37 Duryodhana.

38 Bhimasena.

39 Duryodhana's.

40 Kunti.

41 Duryodhana.

42 Yudhishthira.

43 The rakshasa woman is Hidimbaa, though we have written it as Hidimba. Her brother is Hidimba. But despite the names being written in the same way, there should be no confusion, since the context makes it clear whether brother or sister is meant.

44 Vasava is Indra and Vritra is a demon killed by Indra.

45 The lady Hidimbaa.

46 Kunti.

47 Droupadi. Krishna is really Krishnaa, while Vasudeva is Krishna. But there is no danger of confusion, since the context will make it clear whether it is Vasudeva or Droupadi.

48 Balarama.

[49] Indra is the slayer of Vritra.

[50] Krishna is speaking to Yudhishthira.

[51] Dhritarashtra.

[52] Dhritarashtra.

[53] Virasena's son is Nala, the story is recounted in Section 32.

[54] Whatever remains of riches.

[55] Kouravya refers to Yudhisthira here.

[56] The word used is nandana. So, beloved of the Kuru lineage is also possible.

[57] The word used is pathya, which can also be translated as diet or regimen.

[58] The region of Sourashtra or Surat.

[59] Satyaki's name.

[60] The word used is nandana. So, beloved of the Vrishni lineage is also possible.

[61] Soubha was a city that flew in the sky.

[62] Krishna is actually Vaasudeva and the son of Vasudeva, though we have written both as Vasudeva. The context will make clear who is meant and there is no danger of confusion between father and son.

[63] Those who live in the Anarta region.

[64] Shishupala wasn't Shalva's brother. The use of the word brother therefore signifies no more than that Shishupala was close to Shalva.

[65] The word used is nandana. So, it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[66] Krishna's conch shell.

[67] One of Shishupala's names.

[68] The word used is nandana.

[69] Soubha was airborne.

[70] The word used is *kachagrahani*, meaning catchers or graspers (*grahani*) of hair (*kacha*) and it is difficult to make sense of this, though it is possible to visualize war instruments that grasped enemy soldiers by the hair. The word might very well be *chakragrahani*, in which case one means instruments that grasp enemy soldiers. That would make better sense.

[71] The word used is *ushtrika*, which means she-camel, as well as a vessel for storing wine or water and made in the shape of a she-camel. Given the context, water vessel seems more appropriate. Since elephants and horses are not being mentioned here, why should she-camels be specifically mentioned?

[72] It is impossible to precisely determine what this weapon was, except that it could kill a hundred people at one time.

[73] Measure of distance equal to one-fourth of a yojana.

[74] To make it difficult for the invading army.

[75] That is, permission.

[76] Ugrasena's name.

[77] Chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry.

[78] Anthills have snakes in them. The word chaitya has several meanings—sacrificial shed, temple, altar, sanctuary and a tree that grows along the road.

[79] The number nine can't be explained, unless there were nine mountains around Dvaraka.

[80] The word used is nandana.

[81] Indra has one thousand eyes.

[82] Samba was Jambavati's son. Jambavati was one of Krishna's wives.

[83] Kshemavriddhi's.

[84] Indra.

[85] Charudeshna.

[86] Soubha flew in the sky.

[87] The word used is nandana.

[88] Pradyumna. Both Pradyumna and Charudeshna were Rukmini's sons. They were brothers.

[89] Makara can be translated as crocodile, but that isn't quite accurate. A makara is a mythical sea animal, bearing some resemblance to both a crocodile and a shark.

[90] The makara.

[91] Indra. This was the Bali who was humbled by Vishnu in his vamana incarnation.

[92] Shalva.

[93] That is, beneath their running feet.

[94] The word used is nandana.

[95] Daruka is Krishna's charioteer. Daruki is Daruka's son and is Pradyumna's charioteer.

[96] Souti is a suta's son. A suta is a charioteer and also a bard or raconteur.

[97] The word used is nandana.

[98] Pradyumna.

[99] Satyaki.

[100] Kritavarma.

[101] Krishna.

[102] The word used is nandana.

[103] The word used is nandana.

[104] The word used is nandana.

[105] Pradyumna.

[106] Repulsing Shalva's weapons.

[107] Shalva.

[108] Kubera.

[109] The word used is nandana.

[110] Kritavarma.

[111] Ugrasena.

[112] Vasudeva's name, Krishna's father.

[113] More literally, the navel of the ocean.

[114] Krishna's bow, made of horn.

[115] The word used is *nataparva*. *Parva* is the feathered shaft of the arrow and *nata* means bent or curved down.

[116] The word prajna means intelligence or wisdom.

[117] The word used is nandana.

[118] Shura's son is Vasudeva, Krishna's father.

[119] The word used is nandana.

[120] Indra.

[121] Krishna's father Vasudeva.

[122] This story has been recounted in Section 1, Volume 1.

[123] The word used is *shakuna*, alternatively *shakuni*. Specifically, this is a vulture, kite or eagle. But the word can also be used for any bird in general.

[124] There was no need to see the object, which was invisible.

[125] Pragjyotisha is far to the east and Shalva has no association with Pragjyotisha. However, Pragjyotisha was associated with asuras. Or perhaps the idea is that Soubha travelled to the east, not necessarily all the way to Pragjyotisha.

[126] There is a sudden jump and lack in consistency and continuity over whether Krishna used the agneya weapon or the chakra. The agneya weapon is left abruptly.

[127] Sudarshana is the name of Krishna's chakra.

[128] Maheshvara is Shiva. Shiva destroyed Tripura, which was inhabited by demons.

[129] Hastinapura, the city of the elephant.

[130] Yudhishthira.

[131] Yudhishthira was his senior in age.

[132] The king is Yudhishthira. This is a sign of affection shown towards someone younger. Both Yudhishthira and Bhima were senior to Krishna in age.

[133] Subhadra and Abhimanyu left with him. Subhadra was Krishna's sister and Abhimanyu was the son of Arjuna and Subhadra.

[134] Name for the Yadavas in general. In this case, Krishna.

[135] Prishata is Drupada's name.

[136] Shuktimati was the capital of Chedi. Dhrishtaketu's sister Karenumati was married to Nakula.

[137] Krishna is the lord of the Dasharhas.

[138] Droupadi.

[139] Dhoumya.

[140] Literally, Bhutapati means the lord (*pati*) of beings (*bhuta*) and is one of Shiva's names. The Pandavas looked like Shiva because they were dressed in skins and had matted hair.

[141] They were already in the forest. So they left for another forest.

[142] That is, the brahmanas.

[143] This is odd. The text says *pitan*, which means yellow. Arrows can be yellow if they are made of brass, but that seems unlikely. Perhaps the text should have said *diptan*, meaning blazing or radiant. That fits better.

[144] Yudhishthira's charioteer.

[145] Droupadi.

[146] Yudhishthira.

[147] The citizens are saying this.

[148] This is a reference to Arjuna.

[149] Yudhishthira.

[150] Droupadi.

[151] Autumn as a synonym for year.

[152] Vedavyasa.

[153] Narada.

[154] The ashoka tree.

[155] Nipas and kadambas are the same trees, similar to the ashoka.

[156] Tree similar to the shala.

[157] Name of a tree.

[158] Name of a tree.

[159] Datyuhas and chakoras are similar birds, the former is the gallinule and the latter is the Greek partridge. Chakoras are believed to feed on moonbeams.

[160] The Sarasvati river. Bhogavati is also the name of the Ganga in the nether worlds.

[161] Yudhishthira.

[162] Shakra is Indra. Heaven is a loose translation. The text says *trivishtapa*, meaning Indra's world.

[163] A charana is a singer or bard. But the word also means a pilgrim, more appropriate in this context.

[164] Entered the forest.

[165] Indra is the one with a thousand eyes. Indra defeated a demon named Maya and killed another demon named Namuchi.

[166] Dasharatha's son, Rama.

[167] The word used is *alarka*, which means a mad or angry dog.

[168] The name of a rishi.

[169] Each name in the list is a lineage descended from a famous sage.

[170] Prahlada's son was Virochana and Virochana's son was Bali. Vishnu appeared before Bali in his vamana (dwarf) incarnation in the form of a brahmana. But that apart, we don't get to know details of the story about how Bali allied with brahmanas and later oppressed them.

[171] That is, a kshatriya.

[172] The text says an elephant without an *ankusha* or goad.

[173] Yudhishthira.

[174] The sacker of cities, Indra's name.

[175] Duryodhana.

[176] Meaning Yudhishthira.

[177] The word used is *chira*, which also means bark.

[178] The many-armed Arjuna is Kartaviryarjuna, king of the Haihayas. He had a

thousand arms because of a boon obtained from Dattatreya. He was Ravana's contemporary and was eventually killed by Parashurama.

179 Bali is asking this. The word used is tata, which means father, but not only in the narrow sense. It can be used for any superior, including a grandfather.

180 The word used is tata again. This means not only son in the narrow sense, but anyone younger in a broad sense.

181 That is, punish.

182 Duryodhana.

183 Bhishma.

184 Drona.

185 Ashvatthama.

186 Duryodhana.

187 Dhata and Vidhata are often synonyms, standing for the creator. To the extent they are being listed separately, Vidhata is more the creator and Dhata is more the preserver.

188 Signifying honoured ones.

189 Exclamations made when offering oblations to the gods.

190 Exclamations made when offering oblations to the ancestors.

191 The word used is *louha* and it can also be translated as copper.

192 An offering made to the vishvadevas, or gods in general, before meals.

193 Ishvara.

194 Ishana is being used here for the supreme god. Both Shiva and Vishnu are referred to as Ishana.

195 Duryodhana.

196 That is, wise.

197 Marichi was Brahma's son and Kashyapa was Marichi's son.

198 The word used is *nihara,* which also means dew. But mist seems more appropriate.

199 Those without life.

200 The idea of ascent doesn't become very clear. It probably refers to ascent to a higher form of life after rebirth.

201 Vidhata.

202 Dhata.

203 Referring to that which one possesses.

[204] Chance and destiny.

[205] Implicitly, one who is an enemy.

[206] This reference to the brahmana is irrelevant and is required only because Droupadi is a woman and therefore, should not normally be so knowledgeable.

[207] The preceptor of the gods.

[208] Yudhishthira.

[209] Arjuna.

[210] Droupadi.

[211] This is probably a reference to Dhrishtadyumna.

[212] Dharma and kama.

[213] This means the time of the day, dharma in the morning, artha during the day and kama in the evening.

[214] Kama in the first part of one's life, artha in the subsequent stage and dharma at the end.

[215] The word used is nandana. So it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[216] Born as a kshatriya.

[217] Dhata.

[218] *Shalyaka*, one with a spear. A hunter with a spear offers bait and obtains his food.

[219] The asuras, specifically the daityas, are the offspring of Diti. The gods, specifically the adityas, are the offspring of Aditi. Both Diti and Aditi were married to Kashyapa.

[220] Duryodhana.

[221] The word used is nandana. So it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[222] Hastinapura.

[223] Indra killed Vritra.

[224] The Panchalas.

[225] Shakuni was from Gandhara, a mountainous region.

[226] *Ayuja* is odd and *yuja* is even. These are numbers thrown up by the dice.

[227] The word *tata* means son, but can be used for anyone who is a junior.

[228] The word tata means father, but can also be used for anyone who is a senior. Duryodhana was younger to Yudhishthira.

[229] The land of the five rivers, the region of the Punjab.

[230] To express delight at the discomfiture of the Pandavas.

[231] The word used is *kala*. This means small fragment or fraction. But specifically, it also means a sixteenth part.

[232] The word used is *patatrina*, which etymologically, means the one with wings. Specifically, patatrina means a bird or an arrow, but the latter fits the text better.

[233] Collyrium is a black pigment applied to the eye with a stick or pencil. The word *sucha* is used. This means needle, but it also means a pointed shoot or blade of kusa grass. Since collyrium is applied to the eye, blade of grass seems to be a better translation than needle.

[234] Time.

[235] A king.

[236] Kunti.

[237] Droupadi. Prativindhya is Droupadi's son.

[238] A kind of herb.

[239] From violating the agreement.

[240] Ashvatthama.

[241] Vis-à-vis the Kouravas and the Pandavas.

[242] Because they are in the employment of the Kouravas.

[243] Karna.

[244] Vyasa is Parashara's son.

[245] Kubera.

[246] Yama.

[247] The reference is to Nara, with whom Arjuna is often equated.

[248] Lokapala literally means lord or protector (*pala*) of the world (*loka*). There are eight Lokapalas in charge of the eight directions and they are Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairita, Varuna, Marut (or Vayu), Kubera and Isha.

[249] Pure arrows, probably means sharp arrows. But it could also mean non-poisonous arrows.

[250] *Dhanu* means bow and veda means knowledge. But dhanurveda means the science of war. There are two reasons why dhanurveda has four parts, the first being the fourfold division of the army into elephants, infantry, chariots and horses. The second concerns four types of weapons—*mukta*, *amukta*, *muktamukta* and *yantramukta*. Mukta weapons like a chakra were released from the hand. Amukta weapons like swords were

never released from the hand. Muktamukta weapons like spears could either be released or held in the hand. And yantramukta weapons like arrows were released from an implement (*yantra*).

251 Ashvatthama.

252 The word used is tata, which can be used in the sense, among others, of any junior.

253 Indra's name. Literally, the destroyer of cities.

254 Droupadi.

255 This is what he had been taught by Yudhishthira, who had in turn been taught by Vyasadeva.

256 Literally, Indra's mountain.

257 Indra has a thousand eyes.

258 Shiva.

259 The Pandavas, that is, the other four Pandavas.

260 Arjuna's.

261 Shiva's name. Literally, the one with three eyes.

262 Shiva.

263 Arjuna was Indra's son.

264 Vaidurya.

265 That is, he ate after a period of six nights was over.

266 The word used is nandana, meaning beloved as well as son.

267 A *pinaka* is both a trident and a bow. In particular, pinaka means Shiva's bow. Shiva is known as Pinaki. He wields both a bow and a trident.

268 Shiva's throat is dark because he consumed the poison thrown up during the churning of the ocean.

269 Sharva is one of Shiva's names.

270 Shiva.

271 Kanchana means gold or golden. The word kanchana is applied to several different kinds of trees.

272 Shiva's consort.

273 The sons of Diti were daityas or demons. Muka was a demon.

274 Referring to the boar.

275 The word used is naracha, which means an iron arrow.

[276] The word used is nandana.

[277] Arjuna's.

[278] So that Arjuna can see Shiva.

[279] Lord (*isha*) of the mountains (*giri*), Shiva's epithet.

[280] Uma was with Shiva.

[281] Shiva.

[282] Kapardin is one of Shiva's names. *Kaparda* or *kapardaka* means braided or matted hair and Shiva is named Kapardin because his hair is matted.

[283] At the time of Daksha's yajna, Shiva uprooted the god Bhaga's eyes.

[284] Shiva's name, the one with a bull (*vrishabha*) on his banner (*dhvaja*).

[285] An ayuta is ten thousand.

[286] The hermitage at Badari or Badarika, one of the sources of the Ganga.

[287] Vrishadhvaja and Vrishabhadhvaja mean the same.

[288] Pashupati is Shiva's name.

[289] The word *bhuta* means beings, but it also means evil spirits.

[290] Nagas and pannagas are serpents. They are different from snakes, because they possess extraordinary powers, including that of assuming any form at will.

[291] Karna is the son of the suta.

[292] Kubera.

[293] These divine weapons were based on mantras, the physical form was immaterial.

[294] Arjuna.

[295] Tryaksha is Shiva's name, meaning the one with three (*tri*) eyes (*aksha*).

[296] The word used is *nirghata*, which also means earthquake.

[297] Shiva, the one with three eyes.

[298] Arjuna.

[299] Varuna.

[300] Vaidurya.

[301] Class of demigods.

[302] Obviously meaning lesser gods.

[303] This is a description of Yama.

[304] Vivasvat is the sun and Dharmaraja Yama is the son of the sun.

[305] Indrani is Indra's consort, Shakra is Indra.

[306] Indra's elephant.

[307] The moon is the lord of the stars.

[308] The word used is nandana. So it can also be translated as beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[309] Drona.

[310] The nivatakavachas are demons. The story will be told in Section 35.

[311] Yama is the son of the sun and so is Karna.

[312] A reference to Krishna.

[313] Danda.

[314] The word used is nandana.

[315] Pasha.

[316] Famous battle that took place between the gods and the demons.

[317] Antardhana means disappearance. This weapon enables the user to become invisible.

[318] In its capacity to put the enemy to sleep, this weapon was also known as *prasvapana.*

[319] The word used is nandana.

[320] Ishana is the supreme god. Specifically, the term is used for both Shiva and Vishnu. It is being used in a general sense here.

[321] Matali is the name of Indra's charioteer.

[1] A hudaguda is an iron club. However, an iron club cannot have wheels. So what is probably meant is some kind of battering-ram made out of iron.

[2] Arjuna.

[3] *Indivara*, a blue lotus.

[4] Shakra is Indra and Arjuna was Indra's son.

[5] Daivata is a word used for the class of gods as a whole. In this context, it seems to mean the minor gods.

[6] The word used is nandana. Hence alternatively, beloved of the Kuru lineage.

[7] The word used is nandana.

[8] The word used is vimana and vimanas are not ordinary chariots. They fly through the sky and are therefore, divine chariots.

[9] By implication, from the earth.

[10] Famous king whose story will be recounted in Section 33.

[11] The name of Indra's garden.

[12] Sacrificial fires.

[13] Translated literally.

[14] That is, have intercourse with the preceptor's wife.

[15] Ayuta, meaning ten thousand. But ayuta can also mean a large number.

[16] Suravithi literally means the road (*vithi*) of the gods (*sura*) and could be a reference to the Milky Way.

[17] The Vishvadevas.

[18] King of the solar dynasty, often described as an ideal king.

[19] The name of a gandharva.

[20] The critical edition's text has Ahuhu. It should read Huhu.

[21] The word used is nandana.

[22] Indra.

[23] Vasava is Indra's name.

[24] Indra killed a demon named Vritra.

[25] Demon killed by Indra.

[26] The fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight. Though not explicitly stated, the reference is probably to the dark lunar fortnight.

[27] *Hava*. Hava is not just any gesture, but a feminine coquettish gesture with amorous overtones.

[28] Arjuna.

[29] Water for washing the feet.

[30] Water for washing the face.

[31] The sense is that the vajra was like thunder and lightning. Consequently, there were clouds and peacocks figure because they dance when it rains.

[32] The critical edition excises some sections that are part of popular renderings of the Mahabharata. That story figures in regional versions and is a story about the apsara Urvashi's desire for Arjuna. Arjuna spurned her because she was like his superior's wife or mother, the Puru dynasty having descended from Urvashi. Urvashi then cursed Arjuna that he would have to live as a woman, bereft of his manhood. Indra reduced the duration of the curse to one year.

[33] The word used is *vishtara*. This means a seat, stool or chair. It is also the seat of the officiating priest at a sacrifice, usually made of kusha grass.

[34] Lomasha.

[35] Alternatively, Badarika.

[36] The story of Sagara will be told in Section 33. He had sixty thousand sons. When he performed a sacrifice, the sacrificial horse was stolen by Indra and taken to the nether regions. The sons were sent in search of the horse and proceeded to dig towards the nether regions. They falsely accused the sage Kapila of stealing the horse and were burnt to ashes because of his rage. Subsequently, their souls were saved when their descendant Bhagiratha brought down the Ganga to the nether regions. The nether regions are often known by the name of patala. However, there are seven nether regions—*atala, vitala, sutala,* rasatala, *talatala, mahatala* and patala. Patala is thus the lowest of the seven nether regions and rasatala is an intermediate one.

[37] A reference to Arjuna.

[38] The word *jvara* should not be interpreted as physical fever only. It also means mental fever and distress.

[39] The quotation marks signify that this is a message from Indra to Yudhishthira.

[40] Dhritarashtra was Ambika's son.

[41] The word used is *gramya*, which means vulgar, as well as rustic.

[42] Yudhishthira.

[43] The word used (*ghrini*) means both compassionate and contemptible. Since Karna is being described disapprovingly, contemptible is more appropriate than compassionate.

[44] The preceptor is Drona. Since Drona is Arjuna's teacher, the implication is that Drona will not fight properly with Arjuna.

[45] The word used is tata. While this means son, it can generally be used for anyone who is a junior.

[46] Sthanu is Shiva's names. Shiva has eleven manifestations in the form of the eleven Rudras.

[47] Meaning Duryodhana.

[48] Krishna.

[49] The Yadavas.

[50] That is, brahmanas who maintained the sacrificial fire.

[51] That is, killed the deer.

[52] Yudhishthira.

[53] Balarama.

[54] This is odd. Choosing a charioteer for Arjuna is premature and the question shouldn't arise at this stage. This reinforces the general impression that this chapter was a later addition and doesn't quite belong.

[55] Balarama.

[56] Shishupala's son is Dhrishtaketu.

[57] Yudhishthira.

[58] Droupadi.

[59] The word used is *devi*. This is a honorific form of address and doesn't mean goddess alone.

[60] Specifically, the hair.

[61] Balarama.

[62] Satyaki.

[63] Droupadi.

[64] This should really be thirteen years.

[65] The word used is tata. This means father, but is also used for any elder or superior.

[66] Alternatively, childish.

[67] This is being addressed to Yudhishthira. So Achyuta is in the sense of one without decay.

[68] A mixture based on honey that is offered to guests. It is made of five ingredients—curds, clarified butter, water, wax and candied sugar.

[69] Yudhishthira.

[70] There were fourteen Manus, who were lords of the earth in fourteen different eras.

Because of descent from Manu, a human is known as *manava*.

71 Though not explicitly stated, Bhima was the king of Vidarbha. This Bhima is not to be confused with the Pandava Bhima.

72 Obviously this means the three sons.

73 The god of love.

74 Damayanti's.

75 Nala was the king of Nishadha.

76 Of his palace.

77 Or geese.

78 Meaning the capital city of Vidarbha, named Kundina.

79 Indra.

80 Maghavan is Indra's name.

81 Bala and Vritra were demons killed by Indra.

82 The lords (pala) of the worlds (loka) are eight in number—Indra, Vahni (Agni), Yama, Nairrita, Varuna, Maruta, Kubera and Isha (Ishana). Sometimes, Vayu is listed instead of Indra. However, especially since Agni is mentioned separately, in this context, the word lokapala is being used in a less specific sense. As will become clear later, only Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama are meant.

83 The god of love, Kandarpa is another of his names.

84 That is, they gave up the intention of soliciting Damayanti for themselves.

85 Varuna.

86 That is, will have to kill myself.

87 A reference to Indra.

88 The thirty gods.

89 Bhogavati is the capital city of the nagas and is located in the nether regions.

90 The four gods, Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama had assumed forms that were identical to that of Nala.

91 Indra.

92 Punyashloka is one of Nala's epithets.

93 That is, divine marks. Gods do not perspire. Nor do their eyes blink. Their feet do not touch the ground and they do not have any shadows.

94 As a mark of choosing him.

95 Each of the four gods gave two boons.

[96] Indra.

[97] Agni.

[98] Agni.

[99] Varuna.

[100] Yayati figures in several sections, such as Section 33.

[101] In the four yuga cycle, *dvapara* and kali are the third and the fourth yuga, with dharma progressively declining as one moves down the yugas. Here, the third and the fourth yugas have been personified.

[102] Dvapara is also the side of a dice marked with two points, *satya* or *krita* with four points, *treta* with three points and kali with one point.

[103] Enter Nala's body. An act of sin would permit Kali to enter Nala's body and make Nala addictive towards gambling and dice.

[104] The word used is sandhya, which means both dawn and dusk, and the attendant ceremonies. In the translation, we have used the evening sense.

[105] Pushkara was Nala's brother. The word pushkara also means intoxication.

[106] This imagery is difficult to understand. It probably means that Kali became the chief dice with which the game would be played.

[107] The bull is the dice with Kali inside it.

[108] Damayanti.

[109] The words hiranya and *suvarna* are separately used. However, hiranya also means silver or any other precious metal. Since the two words are separately used, we have translated hiranya as silver.

[110] Nala's charioteer Varshneya.

[111] Nala and Damayanti's son and daughter.

[112] Kundina is the capital of Vidarbha, that is, Damayanti's father's capital.

[113] That is, Indrasenaa, to distinguish from the boy Indrasena.

[114] Outside the city.

[115] Nala.

[116] The flesh would be his food and the plumage his riches.

[117] The southern part of India, the region of the Deccan.

[118] Damayanti had shared her garment with Nala.

[119] The word used is sabha. This means an assembly hall or council. It also means a place where gambling occurs. But it is also generally used for any place frequented by the public.

120 That is, she became tired.

121 An *ajagara*. An ajagara is so named because it swallows goats (*aja*).

122 The word used is *graham*, normally used for a crocodile or shark.

123 The word used is *lubdhaka*, which means a hunter, but can also be a proper name. It also means someone who is covetous.

124 Kind of tree.

125 The sacred fig tree.

126 Kind of tree.

127 Tree used for medicinal purposes.

128 Tree with red blossoms.

129 Kind of tree.

130 The soap-berry tree.

131 Sandalwood trees.

132 The silk-cotton tree.

133 The rose-apple tree.

134 Tree with red or white flowers.

135 Kind of tree.

136 Teak.

137 Kind of plant.

138 Myrobalan.

139 Fig trees.

140 Flowering tree.

141 Kind of tree.

142 The jujube tree.

143 Indian fig tree.

144 Name of a tree, also known as piyala.

145 Palmyra trees.

146 Date trees.

147 A green herb.

148 Kind of myrobalan tree.

149 Nala.

150 Kind of tree with fragrant blossoms.

[151] Name of a tree with fragrant blossoms, also known as *nagakeshara*.

[152] Nala.

[153] That is, maintains the sacrificial fire.

[154] More specifically, follows the Vedas.

[155] It is not obvious what Dramida is. It could be that Dravida is meant. Alternatively, there might be a typo, because some regional versions have *parvata* instead of Dramida. In that case, the tree would be compared to a king of the mountains.

[156] The ashoka tree has red flowers and is believed to blossom when it is struck by the feet of beautiful women. *Shoka* means sorrow and the tree's name literally means without sorrow. It is so named because it removes sorrow from the mind of anyone who looks at the tree. That's the reason Damayanti asks the tree to alleviate her sorrow.

[157] In accordance with your name.

[158] The ruddy goose.

[159] The feminine of yaksha and rakshasa respectively.

[160] The elephants who were part of the caravan.

[161] A sairandhri is a female servant who works in the inner quarters and is therefore superior to a common slave girl. This was also the name Droupadi used when she became a servant to Sudeshna, King Virata's wife. By describing herself as a sairandhri, Damayanti is signifying her desire to work in the palace.

[162] Nala had a boon that a fire would do him no harm.

[163] This is a reference to Kali, who is inside Nala.

[164] The sense is not clear. Perhaps it is a reference to those who possessed secret knowledge.

[165] Rituparna was the king of Ayodhya.

[166] Rituparna's charioteers. Varshneya is Nala's old charioteer, who has found employment with Rituparna.

[167] Manmatha is the god of love and Rati is his consort.

[168] Rahu is a demon who sought to drink *amrita*, but was caught, and resolved vengeance on the sun and the moon. Consequently, as one of the nine planets, Rahu swallows up the sun and the moon at the time of eclipses.

[169] Rohini is the fourth nakshatra. While all the nakshatras are married to the moon, Rohini is the favourite wife.

[170] A birthmark. Alternatively, a mole.

[171] It was a palanquin.

[172] Another name for Rituparna.

[173] Sudeva.

[174] *Avarta*, an auspicious lock of hair on the back of a horse, curling backwards.

[175] A famous authority who wrote about horses.

[176] This is strange, because Bahuka is deformed.

[177] Since Varshneya is Nala's old charioteer, he knows Nala well. The only difficulty is that Nala's form is now different.

[178] Bahuka.

[179] Of reaching Vidarbha in time.

[180] Meaning Damayanti.

[181] The capital of Vidarbha.

[182] The ones that were in Vidarbha, not the ones Nala was driving.

[183] It is not clear what this means. Perhaps it means that Nala has never made excessive demands on Damayanti. Perhaps it means that Nala has behaved like an impotent person towards other women.

[184] Of the palace.

[185] Was not known to Bhima. So Bhima wondered why Rituparna had suddenly come.

[186] This is the daughter Indrasenaa. The son is Indrasena. But given the way names have been written in this translation, Indrasenaa is also written as Indrasena.

[187] With a message.

[188] To Bhima.

[189] Nala had held it in trust.

[190] Bahuka (Nala) could no longer be his charioteer. Varshneya was Nala's charioteer and would therefore stay on with Nala.

[191] The word used is ayuta, meaning ten thousand. But here, many years, rather than a precise number, are meant.

[192] Nala.

[193] Pushkara.

[194] One of the seven continents (dvipa) that surround Mount Meru. Bharatavarsha is part of Jambudvipa.

[195] Droupadi.

[196] Yudhishthira.

[197] A sacred tirtha.

[198] Yudhishthira.

[199] Jaya is one of Arjuna's names and means victory. Jaya is also one of Yudhishthira's names.

[200] Meaning the other Pandavas.

[201] Kubera's park or pleasure garden.

[202] Yudhishthira.

[203] The many-armed Arjuna is Kartavirya Arjuna, the king of the Haihayas who was killed by Parashurama.

[204] Pundarikaksha means lotus-eyed, since pundarika is a white lotus and aksha means eye. Pundarikaksha is a proper name for Vishnu, and Krishna. Pundarikaksha is not quite a proper name for Arjuna, unless he is equated with Vishnu or Krishna. Perhaps Droupadi simply means that Arjuna has eyes like those of a lotus.

[205] Vasava is Indra and Arjuna is Indra's son.

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Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110 017, India
Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA
Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 2Y3, Canada (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)
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Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Block D, Rosebank Office Park, 181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, Gauteng 2193, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

First published by Penguin Books India 2010

Cover design by Nitesh Mohanty

ISBN: 978-01-4310-014-0

This digital edition published in 2012.
e-ISBN: 978-81-8475-403-2